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Nick Carter Stories

~AT RISK OF LIFE~

OR

NICK CARTER'S ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ GOVERMENT CASE

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No. 49. NEW YORK, August 16, 1913. **Price Five Cents.**

AT RISK OF LIFE;

Or, NICK CARTER'S GOVERNMENT CASE.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAN IN DISGUISE.

An elderly man wearing gold-bowed spectacles, a black frock coat, and a brown derby hat, certainly a very unfashionable and bizarre combination—this elderly looking man, having many of the earmarks of a rural preacher, entered the Rockford city hall about two o'clock one May afternoon and halted with manifest uncertainty in the main corridor.

"I am looking for the mayor's office," said he, when the janitor of the building approached him.

"That way," said the janitor, pointing. "First turn to the right. First door on the left."

"Thank you," bowed the stranger. "Thank you very much."

He moved on and presently found the door designated. He did not venture to enter, but knocked a bit gingerly on one of the panels.

The summons brought a man of thirty to the door, a clean-cut, smoothly shaved, gray-eyed man, with a pen over his ear and a piece of blotting paper in his hand.

"Well?" he said tersely.

"Is the mayor in?" questioned the other diffidently.

"Yes, he's here, but he's busy. Too busy to see strangers."

The visitor took a little of the supercilious wind out of the sails of his observer by replying, a bit curtly:

"Not too busy to see me, I guess. Take in my card."

He produced it, sealed in an envelope, while speaking, and tendered it with a look that few would have disregarded.

The young man vanished, but presently reappeared.

"Come in, sir," he now said quite politely. "Mayor Devlin will see you."

"I thought he would," was the reply, dryly made.

The speaker passed through an outer office, evidently that of the mayor's secretary, and into that of the chief magistrate.

The scene of these and subsequent sensational episodes, the seaboard city of Rockford, herein fictitiously named, was only one hour's run by express from New York. That the stranger described came from the latter city, however, his most discerning observer would not have suspected.

His card, nevertheless, then lying on Mayor Devlin's roll-top desk, bore the name of the famous New York detective—Nicholas Carter.

The mayor had turned in his swivel chair to receive the detective. He was a well-built, distinguished-looking man, smoothly shaven and still under fifty. He had been the mayor of Rockford for seven successive years, a not entirely creditable fact, perhaps, since the political machine in that locality was said to be somewhat off color. Mayor Devlin looked like a man of lofty character and sterling integrity, nevertheless, and he talked like one.

"Well, well, come in and sit down, Mr.——"

Nick checked him with a gesture, then closed the office door. He paused near it for a moment, listening, then turned and placed a chair near that of his observer.

"Pardon me, Mr. Devlin, for being a little cautious," said he. "My mission makes it imperative."

"But, Mr. Gaston, my secretary, is entirely trustworthy."

"No doubt," said Nick. "But a gentleman is with him whom you may not know, or for whom you cannot vouch. I preferred that you should not mention my name. I sent in my card under seal, that it might be read by you alone."

"I inferred so, of course," Mayor Devlin replied. "But what is the need of such extreme circumspection?"

"You know why I am here, don't you?"

"Yes, in a measure."

"If you were fully informed, you would readily see why

I do not want it generally known that I am in Rockford," said Nick. "Secret-service work can be successfully done only secretly. If the criminals I have been employed to run down are operating in this locality, as is strongly suspected, it would be unwise to publish the fact that I am in Rockford. They would at once suspect my mission."

"No doubt, Mr. Carter," said the magistrate, with a smile. "We are not often favored with a visit by a detective of your distinction. I hope I may be able to assist you. I infer that you think so, or you would not have called on me."

"I want a little information, Mayor Devlin, and you and Mr. Chester Carroll, the customs collector of this port, should be able to supply it," Nick replied. "I understand that you are the only two persons informed of the fact that the government has employed me on this case."

"I know of no other, Mr. Carter."

"You have told nobody?"

"Certainly not," Devlin said warmly. "I am sure, too, that Collector Carroll has been equally discreet."

"I hope so," said Nick. "Now, Mr. Devlin, a word about my business."

"My time is yours, Mr. Carter."

"About six months ago, Mr. Devlin, there was discovered in a New York express office a case of very costly foreign laces, which undoubtedly were smuggled into this country. The shipper's card had been torn off, presumably by accident, and the case itself was not marked. The waybills showed that it was shipped to one Margaret Dawn, to be held in the express office until called for. The fact that the case bore no card led to its being opened, when the laces were discovered and immediate suspicion aroused. The matter was reported to the customs officials, and a detective was stationed in the express office to arrest the woman, or whoever claimed the case. The detective remained there two weeks, but no claimant appeared."

"The crooks had learned of their danger."

"Undoubtedly."

"Naturally, then, they became wary. I understand that no woman named Margaret Dawn could be found in New York."

"That is true," said Nick. "The name was fictitious."

"One used for shipping only that particular case of goods, I suppose," Devlin remarked. "Different names would be used on all others."

"Certainly."

"It could not be learned, then, for whom the laces were intended?"

"No," said Nick. "In the meantime, of course, efforts were made to trace the goods to the point of shipment. That was not difficult. It was learned that the case had been sent through the Rockford office of the express company. There, however, the trail was lost. It could not be learned by whom the case had been shipped. The clerk who received it could not remember whether a receipt had been given, nor by whom the case was brought to the local office."

"The same precautions evidently were taken at both ends," said Devlin.

"Exactly. To make a long story short," Nick added, "subsequent investigations made by capable treasury agents have revealed, beyond any reasonable doubt, the existence of a smuggling conspiracy of large proportions. It is known that a vast quantity of contraband goods of various kinds have been brought into this country during the past two years, defrauding the United States treasury out of duties amounting to thousands of dollars."

"So I understand," said Devlin.

"Where and how these goods were brought in, by whom they were received, and to whom they were finally delivered, as well as any definite details of the conspiracy, the treasury agents employed on the case have not been able to discover. Certain clews picked up several weeks ago, however, indicate almost conclusively that the gang engaged in smuggling the goods has been working in this locality. Suspicious shipments have been traced to various railway stations within a radius of twenty miles of Rockford, and it is believed that a headquarters of the gang is in this city, or some point near it."

"I have been so informed, Mr. Carter, but it seems utterly incredible," Mayor Devlin said, more gravely. "The local police know of these suspicions, and a constant watch for evidence confirming them has proved entirely futile. Carroll, our customs collector, is a very capable man, moreover, and he is absolutely sure that nothing gets by him. As a matter of fact, very little business is done in the local customhouse, Mr. Carter, and the office of the collector of this port is a good deal of a sinecure. It is more of an honorary position than one of active service."

"I am aware of that," Nick replied. "It is not suspected that any contraband goods are worked through the local customhouse, but that the smuggling is done on the outside. Because of these suspicions, one of the most capable inspectors connected with the treasury department in Washington was sent here two weeks ago to run down, if possible, the gang believed to be quartered in this locality."

"You refer to Inspector Horton?"

"Yes."

"I have frequently met him."

"He is a very keen and capable man," said Nick. "His record up to this time is a remarkably good one. He was thought to be the best man for this work, and he has been handicapped with no restrictions."

"That is as it should be," said Devlin.

"His work, however, has not been satisfactory," Nick added. "His reports indicate that he has made no headway. The department in Washington, therefore, having no man in whom they have greater confidence, decided to employ me on the case."

"So you wrote me."

"I have been to Washington and had a conference with the secretary of the treasury. I have all of the data relating to the case, which, I will admit, is not very definite. I decided to undertake an investigation, nevertheless, and am here for that purpose. As I wrote you, only you and Collector Carroll are informed of the fact. For obvious reasons, Mr. Devlin, I do not want Inspector Horton to know that I am on the case and in the employ of the government."

"I do not think he knows it."

"Certainly not, since neither of you would have told him."

"I shall tell you frankly, however, what I do think, Mr. Carter," said Mayor Devlin, more gravely.

"What is that?" Nick inquired.

"I think that the government has made a mistake; that it has expected too much of Horton, and acted with un-

necessary haste in putting you on the case. Such work as that required of Horton is not accomplished in a day, a week, or a month. As the secret-service records show, years sometimes are required to run down a gang of clever criminals. With a little more patience, Mr. Carter, the government would probably have found that Inspector Horton has made good."

"Made good?" Nick echoed inquiringly. "What do you mean?"

"He evidently has discovered the gang of smugglers."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because he has, in effect, said so," Mayor Devlin declared. "Naturally, since I am mayor of the city and in a position to aid him, if necessary, he frequently has conferred with me, as well as Collector Carroll."

"Naturally," Nick admitted.

"He came here yesterday afternoon to see me, but I was out," Mayor Devlin added, taking a sheet of paper from a pile of open letters on his desk. "Failing to find me, he left these few lines for me, which I found written on a pad when I returned. Fortunately, I tossed the sheet among my unanswered letters. Shall I read it, or will you?"

"Read it," said Nick.

Mayor Devlin did so:

"MY DEAR DEVLIN: I have finally succeeded, or am in a way to speedy and complete success. I have discovered the ringleader of the smugglers, and where the gang probably is quartered. Am off to see Carroll, with whom I shall confer, but who has gone home for the day. Will see you to-morrow. HORTON."

Nick Carter's countenance underwent no change while he listened. He drew up a little in his chair, however, remarking:

"Well, well, that's good news, Devlin."

"I thought you would say so."

"It does indicate, indeed, that Horton has finally made good, or is in a way to do so. What more has he reported, or have you heard?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Not a word," said Devlin, noting the detective's more serious intonation.

"That's rather strange," said Nick. "At what time was Horton here yesterday afternoon?"

"About four o'clock."

"And when did you return and find this communication?"

"Soon after five."

"And you have not seen Horton to-day?"

"No."

"Nor Carroll?"

"Neither of them," said Mayor Devlin. "I phoned to Carroll's house last evening, hoping to learn more, but I could not get an answer. I inferred that he was absent, presumably with Horton."

"Didn't you get any answer?"

"No. I supposed no one was at home."

"Has Carroll a family?"

"No. He is a bachelor. He lives in North Rockford, two miles out of the city. He occupies the old homestead in which his family has dwelt for generations, since colonial days, in fact. He employs a housekeeper and her daughter, also a chauffeur and a man for general work on the place. It's quite an extensive estate."

"Is he wealthy?"

"No, indeed. He has a moderate income, however, sufficient for his needs. He lives well, and has been customs collector here for several years."

"It's very strange that you have heard nothing from him, nor from Horton. He has an office in the customhouse, of course?"

"Yes, of course."

"Ring him up, please," Nick said abruptly, glancing at the telephone on the mayor's desk. "Ring him up and see what he can tell you."

Mayor Devlin hastened to obey—only to turn and say, after a moment:

"Well, well, Nick, this is still more strange. Carroll is not there. He has not been to the customhouse to-day, nor has any word been received from him."

"Try his residence," Nick directed.

Mayor Devlin again obeyed—but was unable to get an answer.

"I cannot fathom it," said he, gazing apprehensively at the detective. "There seems to be no one at home. I happen to know, however, that the housekeeper very seldom is absent. The place is somewhat isolated, and she nearly always is there."

"Are you well acquainted out there?"

"Very. Carroll and I are close friends. Hardly a week passes in which I do not visit him."

"Have you a motor car?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"In the garage."

"Ring for it," said Nick gravely. "We'll go out to the Carroll place. Unless I am much mistaken, Devlin, there is something wrong out there. Can you conveniently go with me?"

"Yes, and willingly. I fear, too, that something may have happened."

Mayor Devlin rang for his car.

The run of three miles was quickly made, partly through a wooded section north of the city, and a diverging road presently brought them in view of the great grille gate closing the driveway into the extensive Carroll estate. A large automobile was standing near it, and Nick muttered quite involuntarily:

"By Jove, I guess I'm right!"

"What's that?" Devlin inquired. "You appear surprised."

"I am," said Nick, pointing. "That car standing at the gate—is mine."

CHAPTER II.

A CURIOUS MYSTERY.

There was a very good reason for the discovery Nick Carter had made—that of his own big and powerful touring car at the gate leading into the extensive Carroll estate.

Although he had arrived alone and in disguise in Rockford that afternoon, Nick had no intention of undertaking single-handed the task confided to him by the government. Before leaving home that day, he had planned with his two chief assistants, Chick Carter and Patsy Garvan, that they should proceed to Rockford with his automobile

and chauffeur, Danny, arriving there in disguise, assuming the character of tourists, and taking quarters in the Stanley House, the leading hotel, and be prepared to confer secretly with him and give him the aid he might require.

They had left New York about noon, therefore, taking a small trunk containing such articles as would be needed for making up in various characters, and had passed through North Rockford about three o'clock. Half a mile beyond this small settlement, however, they had come to an unmarked fork in the road, where they were uncertain which branch should be taken.

"Run on as far as that gate, Danny," said Chick, who was seated with Patsy in the tonneau. "It evidently opens into the grounds of a large country estate. There's the roof of a big stone house beyond the trees. We'll inquire at the gatekeeper's lodge."

"Gee, it's some place!" remarked Patsy, drawing up to survey it while they approached.

He could see a rising sweep of many acres, partly covered with fine old trees. The acclivity led up to a headland overlooking the sea, and was flanked on one side by a narrow river, the estate evidently occupying the entire jutting point of land between the two.

The opposite bank of the river was thickly wooded, with not a dwelling in sight, and the detective afterward learned that all of the property abutting on both sides of the stream once had been owned by the Carroll family.

"Some place, Patsy, is right," Chick agreed. "It's as old as the hills, and a bit run down, but I'll wager it has an eventful history."

"I'd risk a trifle on that, Chick."

"Look at the house. It's built of stone, and half covered with clinging ivy. That dwelling is two hundred years old, if it's a day."

"And still as firm as Gibraltar."

"Sure thing. Only the walls and fences surrounding the place have gone to the bad. Run up to the grille gate, Danny, and I'll try to raise the keeper."

High hedges and fences somewhat out of repair divided the estate from the rural road. The gate referred to was made of tall iron pickets, and hung between two huge granite posts, on either side of a driveway leading to the house, which was a hundred yards up the hill. On the right, half buried amid overhanging trees and shrubbery, was a small wooden house originally designed for a gardener and gatekeeper.

"There's no one in sight on the place," said Chick, as they sprang out of the car when Danny came to a stop.

"The family must be abroad, or gone out riding," suggested Patsy, following him.

"Neither," said Chick.

"What puts you so wise?"

"They are not abroad, Patsy, because one of the windows is open for ventilation, and none of the lace draperies have been taken down. They are not out riding, because there are no fresh tracks in the driveway. The doors of the stable and garage are both closed, moreover, and they are usually open when vehicles are out. Ah, this side gate is ajar."

It was a smaller one, like the other, opening into a walk leading to the gardener's lodge. One nearer glance at the house, however, at the shuttered windows and grass-grown walk, convinced Chick that the lodge was not occupied, nor longer in use.

"Nothing doing," said he, though he knocked on the door. "This crib has not been occupied for years."

"We may as well plug along, then, and take a chance of hitting the right road," said Patsy.

"Not much!" Chick objected. "No halfway work for mine."

"You are going up to the house?"

"Sure. Having started, Patsy, let's get what we came after."

"All right. I'm with you."

"Besides, I want a look from the headland. The view must be very fine."

They found it so when they drew nearer the house and outbuildings. There was a broad sweep of sunlit ocean and winding river, both flanking a bluff some thirty feet above the sea level, with the irregular contour of the land in view for miles to the north, but obscured in the opposite direction by the wooded hills beyond the river and rising between it and Rockford city, strong two miles away.

No time was spent in admiration of the outlook, however, for Chick immediately turned his steps toward the front door of the gray stone house, the massive ivy-grown walls of which reminded him of an ancient castle, or isolated old monastery.

"By Jove, it's strange there is no one in sight," he remarked. "The entire place seems to be deserted."

"That big brass knocker on the front door ought to raise some one," Patsy replied. "I'll crack it once, and see."

He proved as good as his word after mounting the steps of a veranda flanking the front and the south side of the house. He raised the heavy Gorgon-headed hammer and brought it down with a terrific bang on the metal plate.

The sound echoed and reëchoed within—but it brought no one to the door.

Chick stepped to a near window, through which he briefly gazed, exclaiming almost immediately:

"By gracious, that's still more strange!"

"What's that?" Patsy turned quickly.

"A light is burning in the hall."

"Are you sure?"

"There are wires for telephone and electric lighting," said Chick, pointing. "The house is equipped with both. I can see the glow of an electric light in the hall. By Jove, there may be something wrong here. Come this way, Patsy. We'll try the side and rear doors, and have a look through the windows."

Chick hurried around the corner of the house while speaking, and his gaze then fell upon a fragment of an alabaster vase lying on the side veranda, in the midst of the splintered fragments of the panes and sashes of a large French window.

"Great guns!" he muttered, as Patsy followed him. "What's the meaning of this?"

"Trouble," said Patsy sententiously.

"Trouble is right."

"This vase was thrown through the window. Was some one daffy, or crazy drunk, or——"

"No, neither," Chick interrupted. "Have a look at the room. This tells the story."

He had hurried to the nearly demolished window. One section of it was open. On the opposite sash hung a twisted and broken lock, the screws of which had been torn from the wood. Observing it, Chick quickly added:

"This window was forced open from outside. There has been a fight here, Patsy, by the looks."

"Gee, I should say so!"

"We have stumbled upon a crime. The room is in shocking disorder."

"Step in," said Patsy. "Let's see what we can find. There's nothing in standing on ceremony, since the last visitors evidently went through this window."

"Stop a moment! See!"

Chick pointed to several circular red spots on the threshold of the window, which opened directly from the veranda into the room.

"Drops of blood," said Patsy.

"Surely." Chick crouched to examine them. "They are perfectly dry. Whatever occurred here must have taken place last night."

"This explains why a light still is burning in the hall."

"Probably. Come in. We'll make an investigation. The house seems to be deserted."

Chick pushed open both sections of the window and entered the room.

It was the library, quite a large, square room, adjoining the main hall of the house, and connecting with a front parlor through a broad, heavily curtained doorway.

The room was in almost indescribable disorder.

Half of the drawn portière mentioned was partly torn from its fastenings, and hung awry against the wainscoted wall.

Several chairs and a table that had stood near the middle of the room were overturned. The articles that had been on the table were scattered broadcast over the floor, books, papers, magazines, and a woman's wicker workbasket. From the last had fallen numerous spools of cotton and silk, and a partly finished undergarment was lying near by. A threaded needle was hanging from it.

A leg of one of the chairs was broken off. The position of the chair under a central chandelier, two of the globes of which were broken and scattered in fragments over the floor, plainly indicated that the chair had been caught up and used for a weapon.

Other articles on the floor in various parts of the room, books, broken vases, and a damaged bronze figure, showed that they had been seized and used for missiles, evidently hurled with utter desperation during a terrific fight.

Such were the most prominent features of the scene found by the detectives, both of whom immediately appreciated its significance.

"Fight is right, Chick," Patsy declared, after a moment. "It was a wicked one, too, for fair."

"All of that," Chick agreed. "It must have occurred in the evening, since the hall is still lighted. A gang of crooks, robbers, or desperadoes of some sort evidently broke through this French window and attacked the persons then in the room. There was a woman here. She evidently was sewing."

"Sure thing. Here's her workbasket on the floor."

"But what has become of her, as well as the servants, if there were any, and the other occupants of the house?"

"Confined in some part of it, perhaps."

"Let's find out," Chick said abruptly. "There will be time enough to study this evidence more carefully. We'll search every room. Go that way, Patsy, while I go this."

Patsy hastened into the adjoining parlor, while Chick strode into the hall.

An electric lamp on the lintel post of a broad colonial stairway was burning, casting only a pale light through the deep hall, in contrast with the bright sunshine in the adjoining rooms.

All of the rooms were in order, with one exception, and did not appear to have been entered by the intruders.

The exception was the dining room, on the floor of which were the tracks of soiled boots. On the table were the remnants of food, also an empty whisky bottle and half a dozen soiled tumblers, in which were the dregs of liquor. The position of the chairs, moreover, and soiled plates on the white tablecloth showed that the ruffians had brought food and drink from the pantry, and apparently made themselves at home during some part of their visit.

"Outrageous!" Chick exclaimed, as Patsy appeared at the door. "They were a bad lot. They must have overcome the family and then filled themselves with grub and whisky."

"But there appears to be nothing stolen," said Patsy. "Those front rooms are in perfect order. There's some silver on the sideboard. That doesn't look like robbery. What's the game, I wonder? What has become of the family?"

"Have a look in the upper rooms," Chick directed. "I'll search the basement and cellar. There ought to be some one in the house. The rascals would not have carried off an entire family, including the servants."

"Gee, I should say not!"

They separated again, and Chick found his way to the basement. He searched every nook and corner of it, but could discover only that a wine closet in the cellar had been broken open and a quantity of liquor probably stolen. He then retraced his steps and rejoined Patsy in one of the front chambers on the second floor.

"Holy smoke! but this is a curious case," was Patsy's greeting. "There is no one in any of these rooms. I'll swear to that."

"Nor in those on the upper floor?"

"Neither floor."

"The closets?"

"Nothing doing. I've searched every closet and corner in which a rat could hide."

"And there is no evidence of robbery?"

"Some of the bureau drawers were open, and money and jewelry may have been taken, but evidently nothing else," said Patsy. "The drawers are filled with clothing. It shows that two women and one man live here, at least, but I cannot find a trace of them."

"Well, well; that's strange, indeed," said Chick, glancing around the prettily furnished room. "The case seems more mysterious, Patsy, the deeper we look into it."

"Gee! I believe you. Have the crooks abducted a whole family, servants and all?"

"What motive can they have had for doing so?"

"Give it up," said Patsy tritely. "It beats me. If the chief was here, he might fathom it. We'd better hike into Rockford, or send Danny, and inform Nick of these circumstances. They may have a bearing upon the case he has tackled. If he were here——"

Patsy broke off abruptly.

A shrill, prolonged whistle from some near point outside fell upon the still air of the afternoon.

"Eureka! That sounds like the chief himself," Patsy

quickly added. "Talk of the devil, they say, and one will hear the thump of his hoofs."

Chick stepped to the window and looked out.

Nick Carter, in company with Mayor Devlin, was coming up the driveway toward the house.

CHAPTER III.

WHOLESALE ABDUCTION.

Nick Carter was met on the veranda by Chick and Patsy, both having hastened out to join him. Danny already had told him why they had stopped at the house.

Introductions followed, further explanations were hurriedly made, and in a very few minutes Nick and Mayor Devlin were informed of what Chick and Patsy had done and discovered.

"Good heavens!" Mayor Devlin exclaimed, after hearing Chick's statements. "This is terrible! You were right, Carter, in suspecting that something has happened. Not a soul in the house, you say? That's mysterious—most mysterious! What do you make of it, Carter?"

Instead of replying immediately, Nick strode to the broken French window and gazed briefly into the disordered library. Mayor Devlin followed him, uttering many ejaculations of dismay, and the detective then turned to him and answered:

"What do I make of it, Mr. Devlin? You have not forgotten, of course, the note Horton left for you yesterday afternoon."

"Forgotten it—no, certainly not."

"It stated that he had discovered the gang of smugglers, or its ringleader."

"True."

"And that he was coming here to confer with Collector Carroll."

'Exactly."

"It's safe to assume that he did so, then, in view of what evidently occurred here," said Nick significantly. "How would he have been likely to come?"

"By the trolley line to North Rockford," said Devlin. "It's only ten minutes' walk from here, down the other fork of the road."

"It's odds, too, that he came alone," said Nick. "This evidence admits of only one interpretation."

"Namely?" questioned Devlin, with manifest anxiety.

"It indicates, in view of the fact that he had discovered the ringleader of the gang of smugglers, that the ringleader also had discovered him, his mission in Rockford, and of what Horton's suspicions and designs consisted. He did what such rascals frequently do under such circumstances: He seized the bull by the horns, and took steps for his own protection."

"You think this was his work, then?"

"I certainly do. He came out here with some of the gang. He discovered Horton in conference with Carroll, probably here in the library, and the miscreants broke through this window and overcame them. They have abducted them, killed them, perhaps, and sunk their bodies in the bay. That remains to be learned."

"But the women—Mrs. Packard and her daughter, Jessie!" cried Devlin, quite pale. "Where are they? The scoundrels would not have abducted them, would they?"

"Not only would, Devlin, but have." Nick said confidently. "See the workbasket and spools on the floor. Obviously Mrs. Packard and her daughter were here. They heard the disclosures Horton made to Carroll. The chief of the gang was listening at this window. He also heard what Horton was saying. The fact that the two women heard it made them as great a menace to his safety as the men themselves. He has abducted all of them, therefore, and may kill all of them, if his safety and that of the gang require it."

"God forbid!" gasped Devlin. "This is terrible—terrible!"

"Gee! that's about the size of it, chief, all the same," said Patsy. "There is no other way of sizing up this evidence."

"But the two men employed on the place?" Devlin again questioned. "Where were they? The scoundrels could not have accomplished this work without a tremendous disturbance. Dixon, the chauffeur, or Mike Reddy, the man of all work, ought to have heard the noise. Where are they? It doesn't seem possible that this gang of desperadoes can have carried off every one on the place."

"Do the two men room in the house?"

"No. They have rooms in the stable."

"Go and search the stable, then," said Nick, glancing in that direction. "Look in the garage, also. Patsy will go with you, Devlin, and in the meantime I'll have a look at this evidence in the library. You remain with me, Chick."

Devlin made no objection, but at once hastened away with Patsy toward the stable and garage, both being some fifty yards from the house.

Nick entered the library, followed by Chick, and both then began a more careful inspection of the evidence already described. They were not long in finding additional features, moreover, some of which appealed to Nick with a significance which he did not then disclose, deferring that until he had collected and considered all of the facts then obtainable.

On the floor in one corner of the room Nick found part of the wristband of a blue woolen skirt, such as seamen wear. It apparently had been torn off during a struggle, of which there was other evidence—an overturned chair near by, also a picture fallen from the wall, as if two struggling men had crashed against it and broken its cord.

"This seems to confirm my theory," Nick remarked, displaying the scrap of woolen shirt. "Neither Horton nor Carroll would have worn a shirt of this kind. It was worn by a sailor, or boatman. It has that sticky dampness imparted to garments by the sea."

"The gang very likely are seamen."

"More than likely, Chick, since the contraband goods are known to have been secretly brought ashore somewhere on this part of the coast."

"I'll a gang of seamen were here last night, then, it's dollars to fried rings that they were the rascals we want," Chick replied.

Nick slipped the scrap of woolen shirt into his pocket, then continued his search.

In one of the walls, that directly opposite the French window, he found no less than five bullet holes, considerably separated. The bullets were embedded in the wall. One had torn a jagged hole in the plastering. Another had splintered the wainscoting near the door leading into the hall.

Nick Carter's brows knit closer when he examined this evidence of a desperate conflict. He said nothing, but he carefully searched each of the other walls for similar bullet holes—and failed to find any.

Returning, he then measured with his eye the distance to the French window, from the position a person ordinarily would have occupied when each of the bullets was fired at him.

"Some one was wounded," Chick remarked, observing him.

"Not with either of those bullets," Nick replied a bit dryly.

"Here are drops of blood on the sill of the window."

"Yes, I saw them."

"They show that some one was wounded."

"Not necessarily with a bullet—nor badly wounded," Nick again said oddly. "A blow on the nose, a scratch on the hand, or any slight injury might have caused those few drops of blood. There would have been more, Chick, if any one had been shot."

"By Jove," that's true, Nick."

"And somewhat significant," Nick added, still with thoughtful mien.

What more he might have said, however, was prevented by shouts from the direction of the stable.

"Ah, they've found them," Chick cried, glancing from the window. "We now shall learn something definite."

Nick followed him to the veranda.

Patsy and Mayor Devlin were returning, accompanied by two men. One was a short, muscular chap, in the twenties, as dark as a mulatto. The other was a freckled, red-haired Irishman of forty, with thin lips and sharp gray eyes. Both appeared to be greatly relieved.

"We found them tied hand and foot in the stable," Patsy reported, as they came up the veranda steps. "They were gagged, also, and tied to ringbolts in one of the walls. They have been there since last evening."

"It's an outrage—a damnable outrage!" Mayor Devlin forcibly declared. "They might have starved, or died of thirst, if we had not found them."

"Faith, I'm near dead now for want of a drink," declared the Irishman, drawing his hand across his parched lips.

"Come into the dining room, both of you, and have something to eat and drink while you answer me a few questions," said Nick, leading the way. "What do you know about this affair?"

"Sure, what little we know can be quick told," said Reddy.

"That's right, sir," added the other.

"Tell it, then," said Nick. "What is your name?"

"Jim Dixon, sir," was the reply. "I run Mr. Carroll's auto and motor boat. Mike Reddy is the man of all work. We room in the stable, sir, and spend nearly every evening playing dominoes, barring I have to take out the car."

"What about last evening?"

"We were at it, as usual, when three men came into the stable through the back door. It was open, and they had no trouble getting in. They held us up with revolvers, and told us to keep quiet. You can bet we did, too, for the infernal blackguards looked as if they meant business. They bound and gagged us, then tied us to rings in the wall, and there we've been, sir, ever since. It sounded mighty good to me when I heard these gentlemen coming to the stable. We'd begun to think it was all over but the shouting."

"Faith, I'm nearly all in, sir, as it is," said Reddy, with his mouth full of bread and meat."

Nick glanced from one to the other, then at the half-dozen soiled whisky tumblers on the table.

"Did you know either of the men?" he inquired.

"How could we, sir? They wore masks," said Dixon.

"All of them?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were there only three?"

"Only three came into the stable, but there were others outside. I could hear them whispering near the back door. I don't know how many there were in all."

"At what time were you held up?"

"About eight o'clock."

"Had you been to supper?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were there any visitors here?"

"One gentleman, sir, who has been out here before to see Mr. Carroll. He's a fine-looking, clean-cut fellow, but I don't know his name. Mr. Carroll told me not to turn in, as he might wish me to take the gentleman to Rockford. So Reddy and I were playing dominoes in the harness room."

"Do you know at what time the visitor arrived here?" Nick inquired.

"Late in the afternoon, sir," said Dixon. "It must have been near six. He had supper with Mr. Carroll and the housekeeper. She and her daughter, Miss Jessie, always eat with him."

"Did the gang close the stable?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long after you were secured?"

"Right away, sir."

"Can you tell me anything about what followed?"

"Only what we heard," Dixon explained. "There were pistol shots a little later, half a dozen of them, I'd say, and I was sure some one had been murdered. That's all we heard for more than an hour."

"And then?"

"Then I heard the rascals going down to the shore. All I could hear was their footsteps when they tramped by the stables. They came and went in a boat, I reckon, for they were roughly dressed, and looked like seamen. The hands of the fellow who tied me were cold and damp, too, as if he'd been handling a wet rope."

"I guess you're right," said Nick. "As a matter of fact, however, that is all the information you can give me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Had you seen any strange boat, or craft of any kind, in this locality?"

"No, sir. The rascals must have come after dark."

"We'll go down to the shore when you have finished eating, and see what we can discover."

"I'm ready now, sir," said Dixon.

He arose, rubbing his wrists, which still bore red marks left by the rope with which he had been bound for nearly twenty-four hours.

Nick Carter became very reticent during the investigations that followed. He went down to the shore with Dixon, accompanied by Chick and Mayor Devlin.

A search revealed that a landing had been made the previous night. There were the marks of a grapnel in the ground near the base of the bluff. The tracks of many feet, moreover, could be seen in a path leading down the steep, shrubbery-covered declivity. The tracks were so intermingled, however, as to be of no great value, nor was

there any other evidence from which more definite conclusions could be drawn.

Nick returned to the house with his companions, where he directed Dixon and Reddy to look after the place for a few days, while he continued his work on the case.

"There is nothing for us to gain by remaining here any longer," he explained to Mayor Devlin. "Our work now lies in other directions. It looks very much as if Inspector Horton would be given a quick passage out of this world. Whether Carroll and the women will suffer the same fate, or whether we can get in our work in time to rescue all hands and round up these rascals, who evidently are rascals of the worst type, remains to be seen."

"You will undertake it, Carter, at least?" said Mayor Devlin.

"I shall do all that can be done, Devlin, and do it as quickly as possible," Nick replied, with convincing earnestness. "We will leave at once and head for Rockford, therefore, that no time may be lost."

CHAPTER IV.

NICK CARTER'S INSIGHT.

"It's a remarkable case. An abduction is a daily occurrence, or nearly so, but not this kind of an abduction. Not often are four persons seized and carried away in this fashion. It's the more remarkable because a United States revenue officer was among them, a man distinguished for his nerve, his courage, his general ability. The gang must have known whom they were going up against when they tackled Dick Horton. That probably is why they went there half a dozen strong. It's a curious case, Nick, all the same."

These observations were made by Chick Carter about an hour after the arrival of the detectives at the Stanley House, the leading hotel in Rockford.

They had come from the Carroll place in Nick's car, leaving Mayor Devlin to return alone to his home in the city. Because of what had occurred, and the publicity that necessarily must follow, Nick no longer tried to conceal his identity and that of his assistants, and they had registered in their true names, and been assigned a large suite of rooms on the second floor of the hotel.

They were seated in the parlor, after having dined in a private room, when Chick made the above comments upon the case. It then was nearly eight o'clock in the evening.

Nick knocked the ashes from his cigar before replying. He had been very thoughtful since leaving the Carroll residence. He had seldom spoken, in fact, and both Chick and Patsy knew that he had something of serious import on his mind.

Nick had, in reality, looked far deeper into the case than either of his assistants. His insight was of a penetrating kind that very few possess, and his acumen and analytical ability were developed in a corresponding degree. He invariably saw more than other men, and interpreted what he saw more correctly. No circumstances, no bit of evidence, however slight, escaped Nick Carter's notice.

"It is more than a curious case, Chick," he replied, after a moment.

"More than curious, Nick?"

"Yes. It is a beastly bad case, I think, with one feature much to be regretted. That is to say, of course, assuming that my suspicions are correct. I don't like the looks of it."

"The case?"

"Yes."

"I don't wonder," Chick said gravely. "It's pretty tough, Nick, if an officer of Horton's ability has been turned down by a gang of water rats engaged in defrauding the government. The evidence certainly points to that."

"I don't agree with you," said Nick, much to the surprise of both hearers.

"Don't agree with me, Nick?"

"Gee! is that so, chief?" questioned Patsy. "What's your idea?"

"I have several ideas, Patsy," Nick replied. "To begin with, Horton is a very keen and capable fellow. It's not like him to have left himself open. If he discovered the ringleader of the gang, and where the rascals are located, he would have taken very good care to keep them in ignorance of his discovery."

"He certainly would, Nick," Chick allowed.

"How did the gang learn, then, that Horton was to visit Carroll late yesterday afternoon and that he would be there in the evening?"

"H'm, that's so," Chick murmured. "I see the point. That's a pertinent question, Nick."

"It's one I asked myself before leaving Devlin's office this afternoon," Nick replied. "It led, in fact, to my hastening out to the Carroll place."

"You suspected something was wrong there?"

"Yes."

"I see."

"We know, of course, that Horton called at the mayor's office and left that note stating his discovery and designs," Nick continued. "But it's not reasonable to suppose that Devlin, or his private secretary, even, if he saw the note, would have betrayed Horton, or have said anything about it."

"Certainly not."

"Furthermore, it was late in the afternoon when Horton left the note, and he then must have gone directly to the Carroll place, since he arrived there before six o'clock."

"One of the gang may have been stealthily watching him."

"Horton would have guarded against that," Nick objected. "He is no novice in his business. Having made such discoveries as his note stated, and intending to take advantage of them sooner or later, of course, he would have taken every precaution against being shadowed, and to prevent the anticipation of his suspicions and designs. No, no, Chick, there's something under the surface."

"You may be right," Chick said thoughtfully.

"There are other points of equal significance."

"Namely?"

"Horton remained there to dinner, and during the evening he and Carroll evidently discussed the discovery he had made and the designs he had in view. It appears that Mrs. Packard and her daughter were present. Isn't it very strange, utterly inconsistent with Horton's customary cautious work, that he discussed such important matters in the presence of two women?"

"It seems so, Nick, I'll admit."

"It not only seems so, but is so," Nick insisted. "I wouldn't have done it, nor you, nor Patsy."

"You bet we wouldn't, chief," put in Patsy emphatically.

"Nor would Horton have been less circumspect. Let's consider for a moment, now, the evidence indicating that a desperate fight occurred. It doesn't look right to me."

"Why so?" Chick inquired.

"Picture the situation," said Nick. "Two men and two women seated in the library. Half a dozen masked men, armed with revolvers, suddenly broke through the French window. What followed—according to the evidence?"

"A miniature battle," said Patsy.

"Exactly," Nick nodded. "One in which Horton, Carroll, and evidently both women seized anything that served for a missile with which to oppose their assailants. Books, vases, and a bronze figure were hurled at the intruders. A chair was seized and used for a weapon, and one leg of it was broken off. A hand-to-hand struggle took place in one corner, during which a painting was torn from the wall. The table and several chairs were overturned—rats!" Nick digressed abruptly. "How abusrd—utterly absurd!"

"But why, Nick?"

"How can you ask such a question? Such a fight would have taken several minutes. Don't ask me to believe that half a dozen men with drawn revolvers could not have overcome those two men and women in less than thirty seconds—if they had wanted to."

"Wanted to?"

"Certainly," said Nick. "Here's another point: Five bullets were fired, yet no person was shot. They were fired at very short range, nevertheless, scarce ten feet. They were fired by members of the gang——"

"How do you know that?" Chick interrupted.

"Because every bullet struck the wall directly opposite the French window. Neither Horton nor Carroll would have fired in that direction. Obviously, they were fired from a point near the window, through which the gang had entered. Do you suppose for a moment, Chick, that all of those bullets would have missed their mark? At such short range, every one of them ought to have rung a bull's-eye."

"Gee! that's right, chief," put in Patsy. "It seems ridiculous to think they were such beastly bad marksmen."

Chick's face had taken on a more serious expression.

"By Jove! you're opening up a broader field, Nick, for fair," said he. "Your reasoning is entirely correct. Such a fight does, when one stops to consider it, seem literally absurd."

"Here's still another point," said Nick: "We know, beyond any reasonable doubt, that Dick Horton was armed."

"Yes, surely."

"Why, then, didn't he use his revolver?"

"How do you know he didn't?"

"Because he's a crack shot, Chick, and would not have missed his man," Nick forcibly argued. "Even if he missed, there is not any evidence of it, a bullet hole in the wall back of where the gang must have approached. There is no bloodshed, moreover, any quantity sufficient to warrant a belief that any person was shot. Take my word for it, Horton did not draw his revolver."

"By Jove! I guess you're right."

"What was he doing, then, during that fight of several minutes? Was he shying books and vases haphazard at the heads of the intruders, or merely over them? If he could do that, as the evidence indicates, he could have pulled his gun."

"That's true, also."

"I know Horton," Nick added. "He has worked with me on several government cases. He is as quick as a flash. He has the nerve of a steeplejack. Given such a situation as appears most probable, such a situation as we have deduced, Horton ordinarily would have had his revolver out in the hundredth part of a second, and would have been plugging those rascals to beat the band. He did nothing of the kind, Chick, and there must have been—some reason for it."

"In other words, then, you think that the fight was a fake," said Chick.

"Yes, in a measure."

"And that the evidence out there was manufactured."

"In part."

"Do you suspect Carroll and the two women?"

"Not at present," said Nick. "I have no reason to suppose that Carroll was armed, nor that he could have put up any other kind of a fight than the evidence indicated. It is not reasonable to suppose, moreover, that he would consent to have his house and property damaged to such an extent, or suffer the abduction of himself and the two women. I am literally sure, however, that Horton was armed and that he could have used his revolver."

"Do you mean that you suspect Horton?"

"That is precisely what I mean."

"You think him a traitor to the government?"

"I do."

"By Jove! that's a serious transgression," said Chick. "It's not often that a revenue officer of Horton's standing goes wrong. It seems almost incredible. What incentive can he have had for——"

"That is what we must discover," Nick interrupted.

"But he has conferred frequently with Mayor Devlin and confided to him the discovery he had made, or claimed to have made."

"He may have done so only as a blind, a move to hide some secret game which he has been playing."

"And that outrage at the Carroll place?"

"Committed with a like object."

"But I don't see how he can have gained anything by it," Chick argued. "How could he derive any advantage from the abduction of Carroll, together with his housekeeper and her daughter? If your suspicions are correct, he certainly did not visit Carroll for any such purpose as he informed Mayor Devlin."

"True."

"Why did he go out there, then? Even if he has turned traitor and is in league with the smugglers, as you imply, what could he gain from such a frame-up?"

"I don't know—yet!" Nick said pointedly.

"But you intend to find out?"

"I certainly do."

"That's the stuff, chief," said Patsy.

"I'm not so sure you are right," Chick demurred. "Dick Horton has an enviable record."

"Chick," Nick replied, emphasizing his remarks with his forefinger, "Dick Horton has been in this locality for two months. He has accomplished nothing, absolutely nothing. What's the reason? What has he been doing? With whom has he been associated? How has he spent his time? I happen to know, Chick, of what Horton's one weakness consists."

"What's that?"

"A handsome woman."

"H'm, I see," said Chick, smiling a bit grimly. "You think Horton may have found his affinity."

"Possibly."

"And that she may be one of the smugglers, or in league with the gang."

"Perhaps."

"And that she has jockeyed Horton into turning traitor?"

"Better men than Horton have fallen for a handsome face or fine figure."

"That's true, Nick."

"And that's the suspicion I'm going to set to work upon," Nick said decidedly. "I have said nothing to Mayor Devlin, nor shall I, for we must get in our work secretly. We must look up Horton's record here. We must find and rescue Carroll and the two women. They may, perhaps, have made discoveries that threaten Horton with exposure. That may explain their abduction. His mission there was, in that case, directly opposite to what he stated to Mayor Devlin, and the note he left the latter was only a blind. We must sift this matter to the bottom, and we'll set about it at once."

"What are your plans?" Chick inquired.

"We will find out, to begin with, where Horton has been living and whether he has been noticeably friendly with any women."

"Both can be easily learned."

"He is a bachelor, and a fine-looking fellow, one who might captivate almost any woman. When undertaking to do so, however, men sometimes get taken in themselves."

"That's what you suspect?"

"Something of the kind. If you get track of any woman, look her up, also, and learn all you can about her. You had better tackle that part of the work, Chick, while Patsy looks up Horton's doings here."

"I'm agreeable," said Chick.

"And you, chief?" questioned Patsy.

"In the meantime, I'll disguise myself as a seaman and visit some of the saloons on the water front," said Nick. "The gang that drank up Carroll's wrisky last night may be thirsting for more by this time."

"Quite likely," laughed Chick.

"They patronize the low barrooms, possibly the dives, if we are to judge their quality from their conduct," Nick added. "Whisky loosens the tongue. I may pick up something worth knowing."

"That's a good scheme, chief," commented Patsy.

"We will compare notes later," said Nick, rising. "It now is only a little after eight. Four hours to midnight. Much may be accomplished in four hours."

CHAPTER V.

THE HANDSOME MANICURE.

Chick Carter and Patsy, following Nick's instructions that evening, made two discoveries. They learned that Horton had been living in a second-class hotel, the Bancroft, under the name of Dick Bannon, also that his habits were good, and that he had frequently been seen in company with a woman having rooms in the same house.

Further inquiries brought to light that the woman's name was Lucy Loring, that she had come to Rockford from New York City about a year before, and established a manicure parlor, in which she since had been doing business. She employed no assistant, nor was anything more definite known about her; and, though her character was said to be good, a certain covert expression in the eyes of Chick's informant, one of the lodgers in the same house, led him to suspect that Lulu Loring, as the lodger called her, was not quite as white as he painted her.

Chick paid her a visit at ten o'clock the following morning. He had learned that she occupied second-floor apartments in a large office building on the main street. Upon arriving at her door, he found it adorned with a polished brass plate bearing her name and vocation:

"Lucy Loring. Manicure."

Chick knocked, waited several seconds, and, hearing nothing from within, opened the door.

It opened into an attractively furnished room. There was a large rug on the floor. The table in the middle of the room was covered with books, magazines, and papers. A portière masked the doorway of an adjoing room. White lace screens were fitted in each of the two windows. In a partly screened corner was a table, on which were the utensils used by the manicurist. A chair stood at opposite sides of it, from one of which a woman quickly arose when the detective entered.

She was a strikingly handsome brunette in the twenties, with glistening, luxuriant hair, a velvety complexion, large, luminous eyes, and superbly curved lips; a woman somewhat above medium height, with a rather slender, sinuous figure, though perfectly developed. She was clad in a dark, close-fitting dress that accentuated her every graceful poise and remarkable beauty. She dropped a napkin with which she was wiping a pair of small scissors, then turned, with an inviting smile, to meet the detective.

"Good morning!" said Chick politely. "Are you engaged?"

"No, indeed," she replied. "Only getting ready for my day's work."

"Not too busy, then, to attend to me?" smiled Chick.

He noticed, nevertheless, that her eyes were fixed upon him with somewhat searching scrutiny, with an expression more intent than ordinarily would be bestowed upon a stranger.

"She suspects me, or has something on her mind," he said to himself, while she was replying.

"Oh, no, far from it," she said, waving him to a chair opposite to that from which she had risen. "I was alone here, and waiting for a patron. Be seated, please."

"Thank you," said Chick, complying.

Then he made a discovery, one that would have escaped most men.

The curved ends of the arms of the polished oak chair which he had taken were—warm.

The remaining parts of the arms were—cold.

Obviously, the chair had just been vacated by some one whose warm hands, laid on the end of the arms, had caused the difference in temperature.

"She lied," thought Chick, without a change of countenance. "She was not alone. Some one has sneaked into that adjoining room, some one with whom she did not wish to be discovered, or want me to see."

Miss Loring took the opposite chair, then drew Chick's hands toward her across the table and began to examine his nails.

"One who must work for a living is seldom too busy to attend to strangers," she remarked, smiling archly at him and taking up the thread of their conversation.

"I suppose so," said Chick.

"That is how one increases one's business," added Lucy. "I am always glad to see a stranger enter. It may mean another permanent patron, you know."

"True."

"You never have called on me before?"

"No. This is my first visit."

"I hope to please you so that you will call again."

"I have no doubt that I shall," said Chick, a bit dryly.

"It's awfully nice of you to say so."

"You are Miss Loring, I infer?"

"Yes, I am. My name is Lucy Loring, but my friends call me Lulu," smiled the girl, with a coquettish glance at him.

"Lulu, eh?" queried Chick, returning the smile. "That's a very pretty name. You would be offended if I added, like the bearer."

"Not offended, but I know that you would flatter me," she replied, laughing. "Are you a stranger in Rockford?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. I don't recall ever having seen you."

"I came here in search of a friend."

"One who lives here?"

"Yes."

"A lady friend, I suppose?" said Lulu, glancing up from her work again and blushing.

"Oh, no," said Chick. "I have no lady friends here. I'm looking for a man."

"Dear me, I was wrong."

"I have not been able to find him, however," Chick added. "I don't know where he is living. You, perhaps, may have met him. His name is Dick Horton."

"Dick Horton?" Miss Loring echoed, with a demure stare at him. "I don't think I know him. I don't recall the name."

"He sometimes uses a fictitious name."

"Yes?"

"Dick Bannon."

"Oh, I know Dick Bannon," Lulu cried quickly. "I know him very well. We are very good friends, in fact, and we live in the same hotel, the Bancroft House."

"Ah, I'm playing in luck," Chick replied. "Some happy inspiration must have sent me to you. The Bancroft House, eh? I shall find him, then. Have you seen Dick lately?"

He wondered what reply she would make, for no publicity had yet been given to the discoveries made at the Carroll place by the detectives. Nick had taken precautions to silence all who were informed of them until he could make a few additional investigations.

"No, I have not seen him lately," Lulu quickly answered, more sharply regarding him. "Not for two days, I think."

"But you know, of course, where he has gone and where I can find him," Chick said pointedly.

"Why do you say that?" The girl's brows knite perceptibly. "What makes you think so? Why should I know, 'of course,' where he can be found?"

"Oh, only because you said you were very good friends," Chick explained, noting her resentment. "He may have told you where he was going."

"May have, but he didn't," said Lulu, a bit curtly.

"No?"

"Not a word. I have no idea where he has gone."

"Well, it doesn't matter. I can find him," said Chick, with a sort of sinister confidence well calculated to impress her. "He's in Rockford on rather hazardous business, in fact, and he may have got into a mess. But I shall find him. I know pretty near where to look for him. I shall find him, all right, and certain persons for whom he has been seeking. I've got a line on them, at least, and shall find him. Take my word for that, Miss Loring. All done?"

"Yes, sir," said Lulu.

Some of the color had faded from her cheeks. Her eyes had a brighter glow, a sharper glitter. She arose when Chick did so, the latter placing a dollar on the table and saying carelessly:

"That's near enough. Never mind the change."

"Thank you, sir. Call again."

"I will, surely," said Chick. "But I must be off now, for I have important business. I'm going on a still hunt for my friend."

He departed as if in a hurry, as if something she had said, or something he had thought of, had led him to feel that haste was imperative. If he could have looked back, he would have seen that the effect was what he intended.

For Lulu Loring's face had underwent a startling change. The color had vanished from it. With features drawn, with her eyes gleaming, and her shapely hands hard clenched, she listened at the closed door until the departing footsteps of the detective convinced her that he had not paused in the corridor, that he was not playing the eavesdropper. Then she turned to the other door, sweeping aside the portière, and beckoned to a man in the adjoining room.

"All right, Joe; he's gone," she said hurriedly. "Come out at once, and get a move on."

"Sure he's gone?" the other tersely questioned, as he emerged.

He was a gaunt, angular man, of nearly forty, wearing a woolen shirt, a seaman's reefer, and a slouch hat; a man burned brown by the sun, a low-browed, most unprepossessing fellow.

"Yes, dead sure," replied Lulu. "I have been listening. You heard what he said?"

"Aye, every word. I had a look at him, too, through the curtains. D'ye know him?"

"He's one of the Carters. That's dead open and shut."

"Aye, so 'tis, as sure as I'm Joe Nelson. But what d'ye make of what he said?"

"That cuts no ice," Lulu declared inelegantly. "I've got things fixed for them, whatever move they make, but there's no telling which way the cat will jump. I'll see the king-pin this noon, however, and put him wise. He'll know what's for the best."

"Aye, that's right, since he's handling the wheel," nodded Nelson.

"In the meantime," Lulu hurriedly added, "you return to Pete Murray's and tell him what has occurred, also that he'll get word whether any move must be made. That will depend upon the course shaped by these Carters."

"How will you know what they're going to do?" questioned the seaman doubtfully.

"I'll find out—leave that to me," asserted the girl, with sinister assurance. "You do what I've directed, Joe, and be quick about it. It will be money in your pocket. I'll put his nibs wise. He'll find a way to fool these Carters. It's as good as done, in fact."

"I reckon that's right, girlie," said Nelson, with a leer on his gaunt face. "I'll be off, then, and notify Cap'n Pete."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MAN WITH A GUN.

Chick Carter did not go far from the door of Lucy Loring's manicure parlor—not out of sight of it.

Concealed by a rise of steps near one end of the corridor, Chick quickly donned an effective disguise, turned his blue serge coat into a brown plaid by reversing it, knocked his soft felt hat into an entirely different shape, and he then awaited developments.

In the meantime he wrote the few following lines on a leaf torn from his notebook:

"Continue to watch the man, as planned. I am off after some one who hid when I entered. Don't know who, but shall trail same to cover. Phone Nick, if necessary, instead of depending on me to inform him. Cannot tell where the trail will lead."

Chick had no time to write more. Watchful all the while, he saw the manicure's door cautiously opened, and the head of a man appeared around the casing—that of Joe Nelson.

"H'm, one of the male gender," Chick dryly mused. "Not a prepossessing fellow. No wonder he kept out of sight. I'll wager he did not visit her to get his nails trimmed. This makes my move all the more binding."

Nelson glanced sharply up and down the corridor, which appeared to be deserted, and he then came out and hastened toward the front stairs.

Chick folded the written note, and stealthily followed him. Upon emerging from the street door, he slipped the wad of paper into the hand of a young man who appeared to be gazing into a jeweler's window.

Patsy Garvan received it, without turning his head.

Nelson then was around a corner of the building.

Chick picked him up a moment later and shadowed him to the trolley line running to North Rockford. It was plainly evident that he intended to take a car bound in that direction. Chick turned back and boarded the first one that came along. He was seated in one corner, apparently absorbed in a newspaper, when Nelson appeared on the rear platform.

Something more than a mile took them out of the city and into a road flanking the woods lying south of North Rockford and stretching east to the sea. There were only a few scattered dwellings in that locality, a small farmhouse here and there on the west side of the road, and Chick began to wonder as to the destination of his quarry.

Suddenly, however, when the car slowed down on a curve, Nelson sprang from the platform and turned in the direction of the woods.

Chick had an eye on him. He rode around the curve, then left the car and stole back under cover of the high shrubbery and scrubby trees skirting the edge of the woods.

Presently, though himself unseen, he again discovered his man.

Nelson had stopped near a break in the shrubbery and was filling a brier pipe. In one hand he had a plug of black navy tobacco, and in the other a large knife, which he presently thrust into a sheath attached to a leather belt.

"That's a seaman's knife, all right, and a seaman's way of carrying it," thought Chick, cautiously watching him. "It looks like a safe bet that I've struck one of the gang. The question is, where is he heading, and what——"

Chick's soliloquy ended abruptly when Nelson, having lighted his pipe, turned sharply on his heel and plunged into the woods. Stealthily approaching the break in the shrubbery, Chick saw him climbing a path leading over a heavily wooded hill, beyond the brow of which he quickly disappeared.

With some little difficulty, despite that Nelson did not once look back, Chick followed him half a mile through the woods, all the while some fifty yards behind him. The sea then could be seen in the distance, glistening in the midday sunlight, also an old wooden house and some outbuildings in a near clearing, from which a narrow lane ran directly north, evidently intercepting the main road at a point considerably beyond where Nelson had left the trolley car.

The gaunt rascal did not go to the house, but paused on the edge of the clearing and shouted, using his hands for a trumpet:

"Hello-o-o! Ahoy! Gaskett!"

His vociferous cries brought a slovenly clad woman to the back door of the house.

"Thet you, Joe!" she shrieked, shading her eyes.

"Aye!" yelled Nelson.

"What yer want?"

"Neil. Is he there?"

"No. Gone over to Murray's. Thet's what he said. He headed up the lane."

"All right," bellowed Nelson, waving his hand. "If he shows up afore I see him, send him over to Pete's. I'll be there."

The woman replied with a gesture, and vanished into the house.

Nelson strode on. He entered the lane and followed it for a short distance, and then struck into a path leading over another hill and down to a deep cove, or inlet, making in from the sea.

On the upland at the edge of the woods was a motley aggregation of old buildings, including a small wooden house, a tumble-down stable and shed, a long boathouse, outside of which a faded sail was spread for repairs, as was evinced by the figure of a roughly clad man bending over it with a thread and needle, and with a palm thimble attached to his hand.

Well within the cove, which was much shut in by the rise of wooded hills on both sides, a small black schooner was lying at anchor with her sails in stays. A solitary man was lounging lazily over her aft rail.

Such was the scene that met Chick Carter's gaze when, after following Nelson to the brow of the hill, he saw him hasten to join the man near the boathouse.

"By Jove! this looks like something doing," he said to himself. Only a chain of criminal links could unite Dick Horton, that handsome manicure, and a gang located in this secluded place, in such close and secret relations. I must contrive to overhear those two rascals. It may give me the key to the whole business."

Their meeting had been significant. The man mending a sail, a rugged, hard-featured fellow of fifty, had thrown aside his thimble and needle, quickly starting up, and was listening, with grim and threatening countenance, to what Nelson was saying, none of which the detective could hear.

Chick lost no time now in carrying out his project. He retreated beyond the brow of the hill, then stole through the woods to a point that brought the boathouse between

him and the two men. Slipping a revolver into his side pocket, he crept down through the low bushes and brushwood, quickly crossing a narrow strip of cleared land, and presently reaching a point directly behind the building.

Despite his caution, however, Chick did not make this change of base without being seen. A man approaching through the lane caught sight of him, noting his stealthy movements, and he crouched behind a bush to watch him —a swarthy, wiry man, in the thirties, roughly clad, and carrying a double-barreled shotgun.

This sanguinary fellow, with eyes evincing his evil purpose, watched Chick until the latter disappeared over the brow of the hill. Then he settled his gun in the hollow of his arm and stealthily followed him.

In the meantime, crouching back of the boathouse, Chick Carter arrived within hearing of Nelson and his companion.

"There's nothing to it, Pete," the latter was saying. "Lulu is dead sartin that the fellow was one of the Carters. They're at the Stanley House, three of 'em, where they hung up after leaving Carroll's place. Lulu got wind of that last night."

"D'ye know what started him after her this morning?" growled the other.

"Not for sure, Pete. He must have got a line on her in some way."

"Wuss'n that, mebbe."

"D'ye mean on us?"

"Aye, that's just what I mean. D'ye know where the covey went?"

"How could I know? I waited to take Lulu's orders. You go and tell Pete Murray, she said, and I hiked out here as quick as I could. She's going to see the king-pin this noon and tell him about it. He'll know what must be done, she said, and——"

"That's all right—that part of it, Joe," growled Murray, interrupting. "But you ought to have kept your eye on the covey. He might have followed you out here."

"How could he? That ain't likely," Nelson quickly protested. "He did not know I was there."

"Don't be so sartin o' that," Murray answered, with an habitual ugly snarl. "These 'ere toadfish who make a business o' running down the likes of us—blast 'em! they have a nasty way of l'arning things. He kept an eye on the door, mebbe, and saw you come out."

"Not much! I'm sure of that."

"We'd better nose around a bit, all the same," Murray insisted. "That's the best way, and the safest."

He swung round while speaking and seized a boat hook that was leaning against the building.

Chick Carter heard him coming. He knew it was impossible to retreat without being seen. Instantly deciding to arrest both men, therefore, he reached for his revolver.

Then the silence behind him was unexpectedly broken by—the man with a gun.

"Avast!" he cried sharply, with a wolfish snarl. "Keep that hand out of your pocket. Up with both of them—or I'll fill you so full of lead you'll weigh a ton."

Chick had swung round like a flash before the last was said.

The speaker stood with the gun leveled, scarce eight feet away.

Hearing the threatening commands, both Murray and Nelson came plunging around a corner of the boathouse, both taking in with a glance the true meaning of the situation.

"By thunder, I reckoned so!" roared Murray, whom Chick afterward learned was the owner of the vessel lying in the cove. "I knew the cursed toadfish was——"

"Stow that, Pete," interrupted the man with a gun. "Bring a piece of marline, Joe, and bind this fellow. He has a gun in his pocket."

"Gun be hanged!" cried Nelson. "Stick him up. I'll fix him."

He ran into the boathouse, returning in less than half a minute with about six feet of tarred marline, with which he quickly tied Chick's hands behind him, with an energy and skill that only seamen possess.

"Now, then," snarled Murray, red with rage, "give an account of yourself. How'd you happen to sight him, Gaskett?"

"I was coming through the lane," replied the other, now lowering the gun. "I saw him trailing Joe over the hill."

"Blast him! Just what I reckoned."

"I sneaked over after him," added Gaskett. "He'd have had you stuck up in half a second, but for me."

"He would, eh?" snarled Murray. "Blast him for a meddling sculpin. Waal, what d'ye say? Haven't you got a tongue? What d'ye say for yourself?"

"I have nothing to say," replied Chick coolly, not having offered the least resistance. "You appear to be doing all of the saying."

"I haven't begun yet, hang you!" Murray retorted. "What was you nosing round here for?"

"To learn all I could about you fellows," Chick bluntly admitted.

"You was, eh? Waal, you'll find you've learned more than is good for you."

"And for you, perhaps," ventured Chick dryly.

"Blast him! bring him along, lads," Murray harshly commanded. "We'll take him on board and pump the truth out of him. Look lively! I'll sing out for Hazen to bring the tender."

"We'll fetch him, Pete," cried Nelson. "Leave him to us."

Chick had no alternative but to submit.

Both ruffians seized him and led him down on the shore, where they quickly disarmed him and thrust his weapons into their own pockets.

Murray in the meantime had shouted lustily to the man on the schooner, who hurriedly cast off a tender and rowed toward a landing near which the group of men were standing.

"You're a detective—that's what you are," snarled Murray, while they waited. "I know you, blast your ugly picture!"

"That saves me the trouble of telling you, then," said Chick.

"Does it, eh?"

"That's what."

"Waal, there'll be enough for you to tell us. Make no mistake about that."

"You'll get fat on what I shall tell you," Chick retorted.

"That means, I reckon, that you close up like an oyster?"

"Something like that."

"Waal, we'll find a way to open you, then," Murray fiercely threatened. "No infernal oyster gets the best of me, as you'll mighty soon l'arn."

"I'll take your word for it," Chick said coolly.

The tender, under the vigorous strokes of a short, swarthy man in a woolen shirt, had made the landing, and Murray swung round and cried harshly:

"Lend a hand, Bill. We've caught a cursed spy, another of those infernal revenue whelps, I reckon. Get him into the tender. Take him on board. I'll soon have him where we can wring the truth out of him. Look lively!"

Chick Carter, with outward indifference to the threatening situation, prepared to take his medicine.

CHAPTER VII.

PATSY GETS BUSY.

Neither Nick Carter nor Patsy Garvan were idle while Chick Carter was engaged as described. Feeling sure that his deductions were correct, also that such a call upon Lucy Loring as Chick had made would cause her to take some step which they could turn to advantage, Nick had assigned to Chick and Patsy the work of causing the girl to break cover and inadvertently start them on the trail of her confederates.

They had not figured, of course, upon the presence of Joe Nelson in her rooms. That was an unexpected contingency, yet one which Patsy immediately sized up correctly, after having read the note which Chick had slipped into his hand.

Furtively watching, Patsy had a momentary look at the man whom Chick was following, and he was sure that he could afterward identify him.

"He looks like a hobo," he said to himself, after reading Chick's communication. "Continue to watch the woman, eh? So that lank rascal was with her, and hid when Chick entered. He had something to fear, then, and Chick is after him for that reason. I'll put Nick wise, all right, after learning what the woman intends doing. I'd better get next to her door. She may telephone to some one, or slip out of a back way, in case Chick has seriously alarmed her."

To think was to act with Patsy, and he was well up the stairs when the last passed through his mind. The corridor was deserted. He arrived at Lulu Loring's door scarce two minutes after Nelson departed, and, after listening for several moments, he felt sure that she was not using the telephone.

"She may have given that lank hobo some instructions," he reasoned. "It's a cinch, in that case, that Chick will make good. He must have some reason, too, for directing me to watch the woman. He got wise to something, else, perhaps, and knows she will make a move of some kind. She must be alone in there now, or he would have given me a tip. I'll lie low for a time and see what comes off."

Patsy concealed himself under the rise of stairs, as Chick had done. He waited and watched for more than an hour, so long, in fact, that his patience was nearly exhausted before his vigil was rewarded—in a way entirely unexpected.

Lulu Loring's door was cautiously opened. A head appeared around the casing. A pair of coal-black eyes glanced sharply through the corridor.

"Gee! I was wrong," thought Patsy. "Another man! He must have been there while Chick was—— No, by thunder, it's the woman herself!"

Patsy had caught sight of her slender, shapely hands when, emerging quickly, she closed and locked the door.

None would have recognized her, nevertheless, for she was clad in a man's seedy gray suit and a loose raincoat. A coarse plaid cap over a wig concealed her own luxuriant hair. Her mouth was masked with a drooping mustache, and her eyes with smoke-colored glasses. Only her hands, which she quickly thrust into the pockets of her coat, would have betrayed her.

"Chick was right, by Jove!" Patsy mentally added. "There certainly is something doing, and I'll have a hand in it."

Lulu Loring, feeling sure she had slipped out of her room unseen, at once hastened from the building.

Patsy, who also was in disguise, stealthily followed her.

Twenty minutes later, or close upon one o'clock, Lulu entered an inferior hotel on the water front, the resort of laborers, stevedores, and seamen of the worst type.

Passing through the office, she entered a smoky barroom adjoining it, then thronged with men at leisure for the noon hour. She glanced around, and presently saw the man she was seeking.

Patsy had entered the barroom through another door, and had an eye on her every movement.

The man whom Lulu joined was standing near the inner end of the long bar. He was a tall, well-built man, apparently in the thirties, with a swarthy skin, a heavy beard, and the general aspect of a seaman. He would readily have been taken for the mate, or possibly the captain, of one of the numerous small coasting vessels then in the city docks.

He turned quickly, upon seeing the disguised girl, then opened the door of a small back room, into which both of them quickly vanished.

Patsy, nevertheless, caught sight of a back window, and through its dirty panes the dark wall of a near building.

"That window for mine," he muttered. "One could hear nothing amid this babel of tongues."

He returned to the street and began to reconnoiter. The wall he had seen was that of a large storehouse, beyond which was a narrow wharf, at which no vessel then was lying. The wharf was deserted and the storehouse closed.

Patsy found a way around the building, and then discovered that he could crawl into a narrow space between it and the side of the hotel, that side in which he had seen the soiled window. It was scarce ten feet away.

"Gee! it's a tight squeeze, all right, but here goes," he said to himself. "I must find out, if possible, who that man is, and what the girl has on her mind."

Though Patsy was booked for disappointment in the latter respect, he was successful in another. He no sooner had wormed his way to a point nearly under the window, than he heard a chair pushed over the bare floor within, while a voice, obviously that of the woman, said quickly:

"I'll go at once, then, and leave it to you."

"That's the better way," replied the man. "I'll look after him. Trust me for that. I'll look after him."

"Shall I return to my rooms?"

"Certainly. Another visitor may show up. You might learn something more."

"That's true. Will you phone me to-night?"

"Yes, if anything happens."

"And if not?"

"I'll contrive to see you, Lulu, in that case."

"So long, then!"

"Good-by!"

"Gee! I can remember that voice, all right," thought Patsy. "It's as cold as ice and as hard as nails. There's no getting out of here in time to pick up the girl again, and what need of tracking her back to her rooms. I'd better find out who this man with whiskers is, and who he's going to look after so sharply. If he—— Holy smoke! there's that lank hobo again."

While worming out of the narrow place, as he had wormed into it, Patsy had suddenly discovered—Joe Nelson.

The gaunt rascal, of whose identity Patsy felt absolutely certain, was vigorously pulling the oars of a small skiff some thirty yards from the warf, and was heading for a landing directly back of the hotel.

Patsy, then nearly out of his concealment, quickly drew back.

At the same moment, Nelson ceased rowing, and turned on the thwart, then began gesticulating violently with one arm, as if to attract some one's attention.

"Hang him, has he seen me?" thought Patsy. "Does he suspect—— No, by Jove! he is waving to the man in the back room. There must be another window. Whiskers evidently has seen him. Gee! I guess I'm in right, after all."

The last was occasioned by a final gesture by Nelson, plainly indicating that he had been seen and understood, and he again had set to work, and presently made the landing.

Patsy then lost sight of him, but he soon heard the bang of a closed door, immediately followed by the voice of Lucy Loring's late companion. Obviously, Nelson had joined him in the back room.

"Well, Joe, what in thunder brings you here?" came the question, quite harshly.

"A dinghy, a pair of oars, and two strong arms," was Nelson's reply, made with a snarl of resentment. "Don't be ugly, mind you, for I'm not the kind that stands for it. You're wanted at the cove."

"By whom?" questioned the other coldly.

"Cap'n Pete."

"For what?"

"We've got him."

"Got whom?"

"Chick Carter, the detective. Hasn't Lulu put you wise?"

"Yes, I've seen her. She left here only five minutes ago. What do you mean by—got him?"

"What d'ye think?" growled Nelson. "We caught him playing the spy back of Murray's boathouse. Gaskett held him up with a shotgun. What else could he do? We've got him on board the *Magpie*, tied hand and foot, and it's up to you to say what shall be done with him."

"Up to him, eh?" thought Patsy, who could plainly overhear what was said. "Evidently, then, Whiskers is the big finger of this gang. That's just what I suspected when the girl came here to see him. But where's the cove, and the *Magpie?* Got Chick, have they? Gee! that spells hustle for me, all right. It's odds, too, that Whiskers isn't much pleased with the news."

Patsy's last conjecture was occasioned by the brief silence that had followed Nelson's disclosures, indicating that the other was taking time to consider them.

"Tell me about it," came the command. "The whole business."

Nelson did so in characteristic terms, stating what had followed Chick's capture.

"Is that all?"

"All up to the time I left."

"What did he say for himself?"

"Say for himself be hanged!" Nelson growled. "He said nothing. Cap'n Pete tried to pump him, but 'twas no go. He could get nothing out of him."

"Couldn't, eh?" The reply came with an oath, and a chair grating noisily on the floor. "I'll find a way to get something out of him. He shall tell me what Nick Carter suspects and intends doing, or I'll know the reason why. Our game shall not be queered by this bunch of sleuths. He'll speak; he'll tell me. If he don't, I'll sink him fifty fathoms deep before nightfall."

"You're going back with me, eh?"

"Yes."

"The dinghy——"

"Hang the dinghy! That's too slow for me. She's fast to the landing, isn't she?"

"Yes, sartin."

"Leave her there, then, and come with me. We'll take the trolley car as far as the woods and then hoof it. Not speak, eh? Get nothing out of him, eh? Wait and see!"

"Gee! no waiting for mine," thought Patsy, as he heard the two men stride from the room. "I'll head off that sinking racket by some hook or crook. Got him with a shotgun, eh? I'll see what I can get, then, with a brace of six-shooters."

There was a threatening gleam in Patsy's eyes when, having wriggled from his close quarters, he stole from behind the storehouse and quickly reached the street. He discovered Nelson and the unknown man just as they turned a near corner, that of a street intercepting the trolley line several blocks away.

Patsy had not time to telephone to Nick, nor could he see a policeman in any direction, by whom he might have safely sent an oral message.

Instead, therefore, while he continued to watch and shadow the two men, he whipped out his notebook and pencil and wrote Nick a note, remarkable only for its terseness, yet which he knew would be perfectly understood.

Stopping a lad whom he met, Patsy gave him a dollar and the folded note, saying impressively:

"Take this to the Stanley House, kid, and hand it to Nick Carter. Don't give it to any one else. If not there, hang round until he shows up. Make sure he gets it, mind you, as soon as possible. Don't fail me, kid, or I may be a dead one to-morrow."

The lad listened, gazed first at the dollar, then into Patsy's earnest eyes. His own lighted while he replied:

"Stanley House—Nick Carter," he said glibly. "I know him, all right. I seen him yesterday. He's the real thing, the only detect in the business. He makes all the others look like dead ones. Fail you—not on your life! He'll get it, mister; you can bet on that."

"Good on your head, kid!" said Patsy. "There are more dollars, mind you, where that came from."

Three minutes later, resolved to act single-handed, if necessary, Patsy boarded a north-bound trolley car, close upon the heels of Joe Nelson and his companion.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOUBLE GAME.

Furtively watching the two men, Patsy Garvan soon was convinced that his espionage was not suspected. The course they took was the same Nelson had taken that morning, and Patsy shadowed them over much of the same ground that Chick had covered.

His course took him to the north side of the cove, however, and he then could see the shack occupied by Peter Murray, the outbuildings, and boathouse, and the low, black schooner at anchor some eighty yards nearer the mouth of the cove. She had swung around since morning, and was hanging straight across the cove, with her stern only some twenty yards from the north shore.

At the same time, too, Patsy discovered Nelson and the unknown man, also Murray and Gaskett, standing on the shore at the head of the cove.

Murray was shouting lustily to Bill Hazen, then alone on the vessel's deck, and was gesticulating for him to take them on board. Hazen immediately cast off the tender, which was alongside, and rowed away to join them.

Patsy quickly sized up the situation, and the possibilities it presented.

"I must board that craft by some hook or crook," he muttered. "The rascals may up sail and head for sea. It might be all over with Chick, then, if that whiskered scoundrel meant what he said. It's the vessel for mine, since Chick's life is at stake. I reckon I can accomplish it unseen, and a wet skin cuts no ice in warm weather."

Stealing hurriedly through the woods, Patsy quickly reached a point somewhat beyond the vessel, then crept down through the shrubbery skirting the rocky shore.

Hazen had arrived at the landing at the head of the cove, in the meantime, and the four men then were getting into the tender.

Patsy glanced at them, and saw that none were looking in his direction.

"It's now or never," he muttered, with grim determination. "It's my only chance."

Still watching the rascals, he dropped upon all fours and crept from the shrubbery, then across the narrow strip of shore, and then into the water. Within thirty seconds only his head was visible above it, and a moment later that also disappeared below the surface.

He had carefully noted the distance and direction. He swam with eyes wide open, remaining under the water as long as he could hold his breath, all the while causing only a slight, imperceptible swirl on the surface, and presently the black hull of the motionless vessel came in view.

Patsy then knew that she was between him and the approaching tender, and he came noiselessly to the surface. A few vigorous strokes brought him alongside. He then could hear the voices of the five men and the splash of the oars, and he realized, with intense disappointment, that he could not possibly reach the deck before them. He listened intently for several moments, and then heard them clambering over the starboard rail amidships.

"Nothing doing for me yet," he muttered. "It's the bobstays for mine. I'll fix that signal for Nick, at least, let come what may. I must wait for a chance to get on deck unseen."

He swam noiselessly to the bow, the overhang of which would serve to concea' him temporarily, at least, and, grasping the chain making down to the stem, he settled in the water until only his head remained above the surface, there to wait and watch for an opportunity to board the low-lying craft.

Chick Carter, bound hand and foot, and tied to a stanchion in the cabin, also heard the band of ruffians come on board. Two of them came down the companionway a moment later, Peter Murray and the unknown man. Despite his disguise, however, the detective immediately recognized him.

"Dick Horton himself, by Jove, just as Nick suspected," flashed through the detective's mind. "A good man gone to the bad, and all the more evil and desperate because of his downfall and the fear of exposure. I guess I'm in hot water, all right."

There was an ugly gleam, indeed, in Horton's eyes. He gazed at Chick for a moment, failing to detect any sign of recognition, then waved Murray aside and took one of the cushioned seats.

"I'll do the talking, Pete," he said curtly. "Order Gaskett and Hazen to keep an eye on the shore. There's no telling who may show up next. Have Nelson break out the stays and heave short. We may need to make sail in a hurry."

"Aye, that's true," growled Murray, shaking his frowzy head. "I'll look after it."

He hastened to the ladder while speaking, and Horton again fixed his searching gaze upon the detective.

"Well, you've had time to think it over," he said significantly. "I suppose you know you're in a mess?"

"It's not the first one," replied Chick coolly.

"It will be the last. Make up your mind to that."

"Possibly. Men of my vocation and yours carry their lives in their hands."

"What do you know about my vocation?" Horton demanded, frowning more darkly.

"All about it," said Chick shortly.

"You've picked up a good deal, then, since you came here," sneered Horton suspiciously.

"I know what I'm talking about."

"Not when you're talking about me."

"Don't I?"

"No."

"Yes, I do," said Chick. "I've known you for years. The disguise you wear does not blind me. You may as well fly your true colors, Horton, for I knew you the moment you entered this cabin."

A red glow appeared under the eyes of the treacherous revenue officer. He bit his lips in silence for a time.

"Ah, well, what matters?" he said, at last. "I might have expected it. It would be better for you, Chick Carter, if you never made that discovery."

"Why better?"

"Because it compels me to insure your silence," Horton darkly answered. "I don't intend to let you Carters spoil the game I am playing. You're a bad lot. I was sorry when I heard you had taken this case."

"You'll be more sorry, Horton, when we have finished our work on it," Chick said pointedly.

"Bah!" Horton ejaculated contemptuously. "Do you suppose for a moment that I shall let you fellows get me? Not by a long chalk. I know you Carters and your methods too well to be caught in a corner. It will take better men than you to queer my game."

"Let it go at that, then," said Chick indifferently. "But what is this game, Horton, and what is there in it for you? It's not often that a man of your cloth and caliber

goes wrong. What can you make out of it? Give it to me straight. What the dickens, Horton, sent you to the bad?"

Horton shrugged his shoulders and smiled a bit grimly.

"Oh, I'll inform you, Carter, if that will give you any satisfaction," he replied. "Why not, indeed? You'll never be in a position to make use of the information. I'll make sure of that, all right."

"We'll take it for granted, then," said Chick. "But the game—what about that?"

"Oh, there was no game on my part when I came to Rockford to get after these fellows," said Horton, with a toss of his head, indicating the gang then on deck. "I was on the level. I knew none of them. I soon got track of them and intended to run them down. So I would have done, too, but for a certain person whom I did not then suspect was in league with them."

"A woman?"

"Yes."

"That's what Nick suspected."

"He knows me," sneered Horton, with moody contempt. "Little good, however, that suspicion will do him. He cannot prove anything, and I'll take mighty good care to silence you. That's all there was to it. I lost my head for the woman, and she was clever enough to string me along until I consented to join the gang. I'm its big finger now, and shall be until I have raked in enough coin to last as long as I live. Then I'll jump the country with her and be heard of no more."

"With the woman?"

"Yes."

"You ought to know, Horton, that you'll be run down sooner or later," said Chick.

"Not much! The law doesn't pursue a dead man."

"A dead man?"

"That's what," Horton nodded, with a sharper gleam in his frowning eyes.

"I don't quite get you," said chick.

"It ought to be plain. Devlin, the mayor of the city, knows I went to confer with Collector Carroll at his residence. The house was attacked by a gang of seamen that evening. Two stable hands were overcome and left securely bound and gagged in the stable. Carroll and two women of the house were abducted by the gang.

"All three will swear they saw me murdered on a vessel that night, and that my body was sunk by the desperadoes. Their testimony, with the evidence planted in support of it, will satisfy the law. Carroll is a man of integrity. That of the women will not be questioned. Only the gang knows me to be alive—and you! That's why you'd be better off if you had not recognized me. I shall silence you."

"I see," said Chick, gazing steadily at him. "So that's your game, eh?"

"Yes."

"Isn't it lame in some respects?"

"What respects?"

"Where are Carroll and the women?"

"We have them in safe-keeping. They don't know where, however."

"They may have recognized you, in spite of your disguise."

"Impossible. They have not seen me."

"They may know some of the men."

"Equally impossible. They see them only when masked. They were blindfolded when taken from the Carroll place and put aboard this craft. They cannot identify the men, nor the vessel. We'll take them up the coast in a few days and liberate them, letting them make their way home. But they can tell nothing definite—except that Inspector Horton was murdered."

"Very clever, Horton, I'm sure," said Chick, not stating in what other respects Nick Carter had found the evidence so lame. "It's a very novel way of acquiring a death certificate."

"It will prove effective," said Horton coolly.

"Unless I shall give you the slip."

"Don't hope for that. You're as good as toes up already."

"But this gang and the vessel——"

"Oh, there is nothing known to their discredit," Horton interrupted. "They've been in these parts for years, doing a coasting business in a small way."

"And smuggling in a larger, eh?"

Horton laughed mirthlessly.

"There's no denying it," he admitted.

"But how is it done?"

"A fat question, Chick, coming from you. Don't you know that smuggling is done on every coast and border, and by all classes of people from millionaires down?"

"Yes, that's true," Chick nodded.

"Scores of reputable vessels take on foreign goods to be stealthily landed in this country. Some of the captains are in touch with this gang. It's an easy matter, with a craft of this size, to slip alongside of their vessels when in port, and under cover of darkness transfer the contraband goods and slip away with them. They are brought here, and concealed for a time, then cautiously shipped to various points. There's a willing and waiting market for them. Murray knows the business."

"And who are some of these sea captains and merchants who handle——"

"That's enough," snapped Horton, scowling. "You already know too much. Surely too much for your own good!"

"And you really intend, Horton, to turn me down, and——"

"I certainly intend to guard myself against exposure, and in your case I shall do it in the only effective way," Horton sternly interrupted. "You invited death when you undertook this work. Don't kick against it, then, when it becomes inevitable. My safety and that of my confederates require it. You must take your medicine, and——"

A fierce shout, the tread of hurrying feet on deck, the sudden cessation of the clanking of the anchor chain—these cut short the threats of the recreant knave in the cabin. He sprang to his feet and hastened up the companionway stairs, with his every feature distorted and his eyes ablaze. One glance at his face, as he disappeared, convinced Chick Carter that he meant all that he had said.

Horton discovered the gang on the forward deck. All were leaning over the bow and gazing downward, while Peter Murray, brandishing a capstan bar, was shouting fiercely:

"Come up here! Come up, blast you, or I'll brain you! How many more wall-eyed sculpins like you are we to——"

Then a voice from below interrupted him, that of

Patsy Garvan, whom Nelson had discovered while heaving short the anchor.

"Oh, stow that, old man, and gimme time," was Patsy's interruption. "You can't make anything by knocking my block off with that baseball bat. I'll come on board. Fall back and gimme room."

Patsy's coolness rather amazed the rascals. They drew back to let him clamber over the rail.

Patsy did so, with a defiant grin on his face, and he left his white handkerchief tied to the bobstay.

Horton came striding forward, demanding, with an oath:

"What's this? What's this, Murray?"

"Another spy—that's what," cried Murray, red with rage. "It's dead lucky, too, that we've got the cursed flatfish. We've got double game now, and mebbe we'll get the other."

"He's one of them, all right," said Horton, glaring at Patsy, whom he knew very well by sight, and whose disguise he had quickly penetrated. "Things are beginning to look bad and we'd better make sure just where we stand."

"That's my idea, blast 'em!"

"Up with some of the canvas, then, and we'll stand out to sea."

"For what?" growled Murray.

"Till we can wring the whole truth from these fellows, Pete, and find out just what Nick Carter knows, or suspects," cried Horton.

"That's the stuff," put in Gaskett.

"Tie this rat up with the other," Horton sharply added. "I'll get the truth from them. I'll learn what we're up against, or it's Davy Jones for them, fifty fathoms deep."

"Gee! this looks like rocky walking," thought Patsy, gazing grimly from one to the other, and held fast all the while by Nelson and Hazen. "I've slipped a cog and fallen all over myself. I wonder will that kid make good."

CHAPTER IX.

NICK TAKES A HAND.

Mayor Devlin looked surprised when Nick Carter strode into his office in the city hall at three o'clock that afternoon, without the ceremony of sending in his card, or even his name.

There was an expression on Nick's strong, clean-cut face, however, denoting that he was not standing on ceremony that afternoon.

"Devlin," he said shortly; "who owns the fastest motor boat in these parts?"

"Collector Carroll, by long odds," said Devlin, wondering.

"How fast is she?"

"She can better eighteen knots."

"How large?"

"A ninety-footer, with twin screw gasoline engine, and——"

"Does his man, Dixon, run her?"

"Yes. He's an all-round machinist, and——"

"Where is your touring car?"

"In the garage. Why do you question me in this——"

"Ring for it," Nick again interrupted. "Then call up police headquarters. Have four well-armed officers ready to go with us. We'll pick them up on the way."

"On the way!" Mayor Devlin flung himself back in his swivel chair and thrust his hands into his pockets. "What are you driving at, Carter? On the way where? What are——"

"See here!" Nick cracked his palm on the top of the mayor's desk. "You do what I direct, Devlin, and question afterward. You are the mayor of this city, and the first in authority. That's why I come to you. You know me, and that I mean what I say. Obey me, then, and within six hours I'll land in your local jail the gang of smugglers infesting this locality."

"Do you mean it, Carter—really mean it?"

"I do."

"That's good enough for me."

Mayor Devlin lurched forward and seized his telephone, then quickly gave the orders Nick had directed.

"The car will be here in five minutes," he announced, replacing the telephone.

"Come with me," said Nick. "We'll wait on the sidewalk. Every moment is of value."

Mayor Devlin seized his coat and hat and accompanied him. During a brief delay on the sidewalk, he resumed his inquiries.

"What's the meaning of this, Nick?" he asked. "What have you learned?"

"Enough to warrant my conduct."

"But when and from whom?"

"Ten minutes ago. A note from Patsy Garvan, one of my assistants."

"Let's see it. What does it state?"

"It would be Greek to you, Devlin," Nick objected. "Each word expresses a volume. It is written in condensed form. My assistants are trained in that line."

"But its import?" persisted Devlin. "Tell me that."

"That may be briefly told," said Nick. "Chick trailed one of the smugglers to cover this morning, probably to their headquarters. He was discovered and secured by others of the band. They have him on board their vessel and have threatened to kill him."

"Horrible—horrible!" put in Devlin.

"Patsy Garvan has also picked up the trail, but could not state where it leads. He will run it down, however, and attempt to board the vessel."

"Brave lad!"

"Oh, we stick to one another even at risk of life," said Nick. "The rascal may put to sea. I want a motor boat that will overhaul them."

"But the vessel—do you know her name?"

"The *Magpie*."

"I never heard of her."

"We'll find her," said Nick confidently.

"But how can you locate her? There are scores of vessels coasting in this section."

"Oh, I can identify her, providing Patsy sets foot on her," Nick insisted. "Do you happen to know a man in these parts named Peter Murray?"

"Why, yes, I know of him," said Devlin quickly.

"What do you know about him?"

"Nothing to his discredit."

"That so?"

"He owns a small coasting schooner, and has lived up North Rockford way for years. He is away most of the time, of course, and——"

"Do you know where he lives when here?"

"Not definitely. I have heard that he owns property on

a cove up north. I'm not sure that is correct, however, nor——"

"It may help," Nick interrupted. "No more at present, Devlin, for here comes your car."

It swerved to the curbing a moment later, and both men sprang into the tonneau.

Three minutes took them to police headquarters, where four policemen found places in the big touring car.

"Now, chauffeur, at top speed to the Carroll place," Nick commanded. "Let her go!"

The run of nearly three miles was made in nine minutes.

As the heavily laden car sped up the long driveway, Jim Dixon was seen coming out of the garage. Before he had fairly recovered from his surprise, Nick was springing out of the car, followed by all except the chauffeur.

"Pull yourself together, Dixon," Nick commanded. "Where is Carroll's launch?"

"At her moorings, sir, under the bluff overlooking the river," said Dixon, staring.

"Bring her round to the landing. We want her as quickly as possible."

"I guess not, sir," Dixon bluntly objected.

"What's that?"

"I have no orders from——"

"My orders go, Dixon."

"Not with me, sir. I never use the launch, unless——"

"Stop right there!" said Nick, with a look that caused Dixon to quail. "You have just ten seconds in which to start after that launch. If you don't start, Dixon, you'll get ten years in the State prison. Take that from me."

"Bring the launch, Dixon, and be quick about it," Mayor Devlin now directed. "I'll take all the responsibility."

"All right, Mr. Devlin. That's different," said Dixon, hurrying away. "I'll make the landing with her in ten minutes."

He made it in less time, in fact, for ten minutes later all hands were on board, the four policemen out of sight in the cabin, Nick and Mayor Devlin on the forward deck, and Dixon in the wheelhouse directly behind them.

Scanning the broad sweep of sunlit sea, Nick could see a dozen schooner-rigged vessels, some shaping a course into port, others departing, and two that were hull down below the horizon.

"Head due south, Dixon," he commanded, as the launch made way. "Have you a glass in there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let me have it."

Dixon obeyed, and for several minutes Nick studied the nearer vessels, all of which were several miles away and widely separated. He knew it would be folly to pursue them at random, and he was about to turn again and question Dixon concerning Murray and the coves in that locality, when, as the launch cleared a headland south of the river, he sighted a small schooner two miles off shore, running due east.

Nick viewed her with the glass for a few moments, then said abruptly, with a thrill of satisfaction in his voice:

"There's our quarry, Devlin."

"That little schooner," cried Devlin excitedly. "Are you sure."

"Absolutely."

"You can read her name?"

"No."

"Why sure, then?"

"Can you see with your naked eye something white fluttering from her bobstay?"

"Yes, quite distinctly."

"It's a handkerchief," said Nick; "tied there by Patsy Garvan, who now is on board. His note stated the signal I might expect."

"By Jove, you Carters work together like the parts of a big machine," declared Mayor Devlin admiringly.

"We are a big machine," said the detective simply.

"I believe you."

"Get after that craft, Dixon," Nick commanded, turning. "How soon can you overhaul her?"

Dixon laughed.

"In less than ten minutes, Mr. Carter," he replied. "There's hardly any wind for her, and we need none."

"Run to the windward of her and slow down some thirty yards away," Nick directed.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Call up those officers, Devlin, and have them concealed under our starboard bulkhead. Tell them to await my orders."

Mayor Devlin hastened to obey.

Within a very few moments the officers were concealed, as directed, waiting with revolvers in hand.

The speedy launch had, in the meantime, been rapidly nearing the slowly moving schooner. Soon only about a hundred yards divided them.

Peter Murray was at the wheel. Joe Nelson was lounging over the windward rail. Both pretended they had nothing on their minds, and less in their vessel. Both gazed indifferently at the launch when she drew nearer.

"That's Murray, steering," said Dixon quietly.

Nick waited until nearly abreast of the vessel, then shouted:

"Hello, there!"

"Hello, you!" returned Murray gruffly.

"Heave to!" said Nick.

"Heave to be hanged!" cried Murray, starting up. "What's eatin' you?"

"Nothing," said Nick, drawing his revolver. "But you throw that craft into the eye of the wind, Mr. Murray, and do it now, or there'll be a dead man at her wheel."

"Say!" Murray fiercely yelled. "What d'ye——"

Nick leveled his revolver.

"This gun will do the saying, Murray," he thundered. "Obey at once, or you'll not hear what it says!"

Murray vented an oath and gave the wheel a turn. The schooner swung into the wind and her sails began flapping.

"Veer off a little, Dixon, then slip alongside," Nick directed.

"Aye, sir."

The maneuver required only a very few moments.

In the meantime, Hazen and Gaskett had appeared on deck.

Presently the broadsides of both vessels nearly touched.

Peter Murray was striding to and fro and swearing like a trooper.

Nick sprang to the rail of the launch.

"Now, my men, follow me," he shouted. "We'll take these rascals into camp."

A roar from the ready officers answered him, and in another moment the five men, Nick at their head, were bounding over the schooner's rail.

The unexpected appearance of the policemen had a salu-

tary effect. Though the smugglers had showed a disposition to oppose Nick, the sight of so many officers with drawn weapons took the wind entirely out of their sails. Three of them threw up their hands, while Murray, snarling and cursing, turned to the wheel to look after his craft—and await the arrest that then was inevitable.

The result proved to be about what Nick Carter expected. Not only were Chick and Patsy speedily liberated in the cabin, where Horton also was found and secured, but in the vessel's forecastle were Collector Carroll, his housekeeper, and her daughter, where all three had been confined since their abduction.

In the vessel's hold, moreover, were found several packages of imported goods, sufficient to prove a criminal case against the rascals, if any further proof was needed than that already obtained by the Carters.

Nick's prediction turned out correctly—within six hours the gang was lodged in the local jail, and their greatly relieved prisoners had returned to their home.

"We shall find plenty of other evidence against the scoundrels," Nick Carter remarked, when dining in the Stanley House with Chick and Patsy that evening. "They are booked to pay the penalty for their crimes, and Horton will get a severe sentence. It's the old story of a foolish man going wrong for a handsome but unprincipled woman. She looked like a devil incarnate when I arrested her."

"I guess that's what she is, all right, chief," put in Patsy.

"Possible," Nick nodded. "It's a pity that all who are identified with such schemes for defrauding the government cannot be discovered and punished. That's next to impossible, however. We have rounded up this gang, nevertheless, and settled the hash of a traitor—and that's a mighty good bit of work."

THE END.

Nick Carter congratulated himself that with the capture of Lulu Loring, Horton, and Peter Murray, the case had been brought to a successful termination, but that very night he finds the work he and his assistants had thought done has only begun, and that the tail of the snake and not its head has been taken. "The deeper Game; or, Nick Carter's Connecting Link," which will be found in the next issue, No. 50, out August 23d, tells of the pursuit of the snake's head.

RETURNED WITH THANKS.

A few years ago there was in portions of the wild West much lawlessness of one kind and another, checked only by an occasional piece of individual retribution, or by an outburst of vigilance-committee work. A curious shooting affair, which occurred in Medora, N. D., is thus described by Mr. Roosevelt:

"I did not see the actual occurrence, but I saw both men immediately afterward, and I heard the shooting, which took place in a saloon on the bank, while I was swimming my horse across the river. I will not give the full names of the two contestants, as I am not certain what has become of them; though I was told that they had since been put in jail or hanged, I forget which.

"One of them was a saloon keeper, familiarly called 'Welshy.' The other man, Hay, had been bickering with him for some time. One day Hay entered the saloon, and the quarrel became at once violent. Welshy suddenly whipped out his revolver, and blazed away at Hay.

"Hay staggered slightly, shook himself, stretched out his hand, and gave back to his would-be slayer the ball, saying:

"'Here, man, here's your bullet!'

"It had glanced along his breast bone, gone a roundabout course, and come out at the point of the shoulder, when, being spent, it dropped down the sleeve into his hand."

Behind the Asylum Bars;

Or, Turned Down as a Hopeless Case.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Twenty years before the story opens, Horace Maxwell quarreled with his father in England. He was disowned, and he came to America to seek his fortune, locating, at last, in Boston as an artist, and changing his name to that of John Wildman.

After a lapse of twenty years Horace Maxwell's father died, but, before he did so, he forgave his son and left him the greater part of his large fortune, leaving but a small portion to Tracy Maxwell, his son by a second wife.

Without disclosing his identity to his brother, Tracy locates Horace. He then arranges with Doctor Kennedy, who is at the head of a large private sanitarium for the insane, to imprison Horace in the sanitarium, and later kill him.

Five days after this agreement is made, Detective Sheridan Keene is called upon by Mary Randall, the fiancée of Horace Maxwell. Miss Randall tells Keene that John Wildman, as she knows him, has mysteriously disappeared, and she begs Keene to take the case. This Keene agrees to do, and he arranges to meet the girl at Horace Maxwell's studio the next day.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE NEGLECTED STUDIO.

Man is an animal of habits. That John Wildman had done something entirely out of his ordinary course; that a stranger had recently appeared with interest in him, a man whose conduct in seeking information of Wildman's betrothed, was at least unusual, and that the latter's past was a mystery even to the girl he was about to wed—upon these facts Sheridan Keene chiefly based an opinion that the strange disappearance of Wildman was a mystery worth investigating.

Half an hour before the time appointed for meeting Mary Randall next morning Keene approached the large apartment house in which the rooms of the artist were located. It was one of the best-appointed houses in the desirable locality about Copley Square, with a fine restaurant, café, and billiard room in a semibasement, and well-furnished flats occupying the six floors above.

That occupied by John Wildman was on the first floor, with windows on two sides, the lofty building occupying a corner of two popular avenues.

Passing through the broad vestibule giving ingress to the office, the detective approached a clerk at the desk and asked carelessly:

"Have you seen anything of Mr. Wildman, the artist this morning?"

"Jack Wildman!" returned the clerk, looking up. "I think he is out of town, sir."

"Out of town?"

"I imagine so, since he has not been in his rooms for several days."

"Do you know where I can reach him by mail?"

"I do not. He left no word where he was going."

"That's curious!" observed Keene, aiming to render the clerk communicative. "Is it like him to disappoint a man on a matter of business?"

"Quite the contrary, sir. As a general thing, Mr. Wildman is very punctilious in such matters. We think it rather curious, where he can have gone; still, he is a man quite able to look after himself. I imagine he will return within a few days, at the longest."

"Do you know by whom he was last seen about here?"

"The janitor saw him go out last Friday afternoon."

"Thanks, very much," bowed Keene, turning away.

"Any word to leave for him?"

"I think not. I will call again."

Returning to the vestibule, the detective next rang the janitor's bell, a summons which speedily brought a young Irishman from some quarter below.

"I am looking for John Wildman's rooms," explained Keene, in his agreeable way. "I hope you'll pardon my troubling you."

"No trouble, sir. That's what I am here for," laughed the janitor. "Mr. Wildman's rooms are off the main corridor there, but he's not at home."

"Has he gone away?"

"Went away last Friday afternoon, sir."

"That's odd," said Keene, with feigned perplexity. "Did you see him leave here?"

"I did, sir. I was standing right here in the doorway."

"Was he alone?"

"He was, sir."

"You didn't notice which way he went, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, I did. He took the cab that stands around the corner, sir; and like as not Jerry—that's the cabman, sir—can tell you where he went."

Without displaying further interest, for he did not wish to create an impression that any suspicion of foul play existed, Keene sauntered out of the door and to the corner, and presently accosted the cabman.

"Where did you drop Mr. Wildman, Jerry, when he employed you last Friday afternoon?" he asked familiarly.

The cabman gave him a sharp glance, and wondered how he had learned his name.

"At the Vendome, sir," he replied.

"The Hotel Vendome?"

"Sure, I don't know of any other Vendome."

"Did Wildman enter the hotel?"

"He did, sir."

"He did not retain your carriage, did he?"

"No, sir. He paid his fare and I turned away. I think he went there to meet a man, sir, for he was shaking hands with a man in the office when I turned my cab."

"A short man, with gray hair, and——"

"Devil a bit of it, sir! He was a big man, with brown whiskers," interrupted the driver.

"Ah, then I am mistaken," remarked Keene, nevertheless suspecting the man to have been the Mr. McKenzie described by Mary Randall. "I am trying to locate one of Wildman's friends, whom I heard was in town. About what time did you take Wildman to the Vendome?"

"Sure, sir, it was close upon three o'clock."

At that moment Keene saw Mary Randall approaching on the opposite side of the street, and with a brief word of thanks the detective turned back and around the corner, and then quickly sought the corridor adjoining the rooms of the missing artist.

He had waited only a few minutes, when Miss Randall also entered.

Her pretty face lighted when she saw him, and, extending her hand, she said gratefully:

"I am so glad to find you here. I feared you might have changed your mind."

"They say wise persons do so," smiled Keene, while she produced the key of the door near which they met. "Mine, however, if changed at all, leans more to your own convictions."

"You have discovered something?" she asked eagerly.

"Nothing of importance," Keene rejoined evasively. "Ah, this is the studio, is it?"

It was a large room facing the front street, and presented the usual characteristics of an artist's studio. Adjoining this was a library and sitting room, with a sleeping room beyond. The furnishings were quite elaborate, yet in excellent taste, and denoted that the occupant was a man of culture.

The rooms were cold, however. A half-burned log lay dead and gray in the fireplace. The lace draperies hung closed at the windows, from their rods to the heavy Wilton carpet covering the floor.

Keene made a rapid survey of both the library and sleeping room, but found nothing to suggest a solution of the mystery.

"Is there a photograph of Mr. Wildman here?" he asked, rejoining Miss Randall in the studio.

"Yes, sir, here in his album."

The picture was that of a handsome man, with frank, expressive eyes, and a broad brow.

"Is he light or dark?" demanded Keene, quickly taking in the general features.

"His hair and eyes are brown, sir."

"And his voice?"

"Very deep and mellow," said Miss Randall, with some emotion. "And when he speaks very loud, sir, it is noticeably strong and resonant."

"I infer that he is a tolerably large man."

"Nearly six feet, sir. There is also a sketch of him here in his portfolio, one he made himself," said Miss Randall, hastening to place the large leather-covered case upon the table.

It contained a score or more of crayon and charcoal sketches, and Keene had begun to study that of the profile she quickly selected and placed in his hand, when a low cry broke from the lips of the girl.

"What have you found?" demanded the detective.

"This room has been entered, sir!" cried Mary Randall, looking up, with cheeks grown suddenly pale; "and since Mr. Wildman's disappearance—I am sure of it, sir! Some of his sketches are missing. I was as familiar with them as if I had drawn them myself."

"Possibly Mr. Wildman removed them."

"But they have been taken away since his disappearance, sir."

"Are you sure of that!" cried Keene.

"Absolutely, sir! When I was here last Saturday morning I noticed that the portfolio had fallen open, and that

its contents were likely to drop to the floor. I immediately put the sketches in place, and sentimentally felt inclined to see the picture now in your hand. In searching for it, I ran through most of the sketches, and I know there were some here then which now are missing."

The girl was speaking with a mingling of excitement and earnestness that was very convincing, and Keene glanced over the sketches remaining in the case. They nearly all were landscapes, with an occasional country house, and the detective presently asked:

"Did you say you were familiar with these? Perhaps you can tell me how many are missing, and give me an idea of their character."

"Indeed, I can, Mr. Keene!" exclaimed Mary Randall, hurriedly running them over. "There are six or eight missing, sir. Three of them were rural scenes; one was that of an old English castle; another that of a picturesque suburban residence, and one a sketch of the River Thames. All of these were drawn by Mr. Wildman during a visit to England."

"Did he say they were sketched during a visit to England?" demanded Keene. "Did he use the word visit?"

"I am sure he did, sir!" exclaimed Mary Randall, looking up with startled eyes. "Why do you speak so strangely, sir?"

"Because, Miss Randall," replied Keene gravely; "I am much more inclined to believe that Mr. Wildman, whom you have suspected to be an Englishman, drew the missing sketches from memory, depicting some of the scenes which, perhaps, were dear to him in that early life of which you have been left uninformed."

"And even then?" faltered the girl tremulously, with a great fear showing in her lifted eyes.

Keene regarded her in silence for a moment, then decided it was best that she should know all that this unexpected discovery suggested to him.

"Even then?" he echoed, taking her hand; "do you not see what such a theft, under such circumstances, would imply?"

"What, sir?"

"That some person has deemed the removal of the sketches to be essential to his own safety, or at least essential to preventing the establishment of John Wildman's true identity. It is a hundred to one, Miss Randall, that your lover's name is not John Wildman."

"Oh, sir!"

"And that his disappearance, if not the result of foul play, is a mystery which requires at least earnest and immediate investigation. But do not be overalarmed, Miss Randall," Keene hastened to add, when the girl sank, half fainting, into a chair near the window. "I do not think it is a case of murder, for it has not that appearance; I rather think that Wildman is now in the power of some person or persons, whose interests may be identified with him, and who may be seeking in some way to coerce him."

"Then his death——"

"You must not apprehend that," Keene quickly interrupted. "Few men dare the scaffold for the sake of gain; and the hope of gain here appears to be the most likely motive, since Wildman has for years been a resident of this country. It is more than probable that the person who entered and stole the missing sketches obtained the key from John Wildman himself, and that alone convinces me that——"

But a sudden movement by Mary Randall there interrupted him.

With a half-suppressed cry, she had quickly risen and drawn back from the window, to stare out with startled gaze through the lace draperies at some object in the street.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STRANGER FROM LONDON.

Startled by the expression on Mary Randall's white face, Keene's impulse was to draw aside the lace curtains to ascertain by what she had been moved and at what she was gazing. But she caught his extended arm and drew him back, crying quickly:

"Don't! Don't let him see you—not here! Not in here!"

"Whom do you mean?"

"There—on the opposite corner. The man who called at the library to see me."

"McKenzie?"

"Yes, McKenzie! I saw him look this way, but he cannot see through the draperies. He is now pretending to have no interest in this direction, yet the very expression on his face affrighted me when I first saw him gazing this way."

Sheridan Keene easily spotted the man on the corner twenty yards distant, and stood briefly studying him.

It was Tracy Maxwell.

As the moth flies at the flame which consumes him, so this Englishman was tempting the fate he most dreaded.

Yet his conduct was not without a serious incentive. The deductions drawn by Keene had been true to the letter. After the execution of his infamous design with Doctor Kennedy, Maxwell had indeed secured the key from the person of his half brother, and had secretly entered the artist's studio for the purpose of destroying any evidence which might serve even to suggest the true identity of Wildman. He had found only the sketches missed by Mary Randall, which were drawings from memory of the artist's home in England, and these Maxwell had decided should be immediately removed and destroyed.

It had been easy to accomplish this unobserved by any person in the house, and Maxwell's call upon Mary Randall had been only to discover if any suspicions of the true state of affairs existed, and if any action to locate Wildman was being taken. That suspicion could possibly be directed against him had seemed utterly improbable.

"He is coming this way!" Keene suddenly cried, as Maxwell started over the crossing. "It is a safe guess that he is coming here."

"What shall we do?"

Keene glanced at the girl's face. It was very pale, and she trembled from head to foot. Quickly taking her hands, the detective said firmly:

"You must compose yourself. If the man is coming here, I want you to receive him precisely as if no suspicion existed. Can you do this? It is for the sake of the man you love."

"Yes, I can do it!" exclaimed Miss Randall, with a quick display of resolution. "What explanation shall I offer him for being here?"

"Say you're seeking for a letter Wildman possibly might have left, or for any evidence tending to explain his absence."

"I understand."

"Make no mention of me."

"Surely not."

"Hasten, then. Replace the portfolio precisely as you found it," cried Keene, darting to the studio door to make sure it was closed.

"And you, Mr. Keene?"

"I shall conceal myself until after his departure," Keene hurriedly explained. "I wish to observe him and hear his voice. Have no fear, Miss Randall, but receive him precisely as if——"

"He is coming, sir. Leave him to me."

The sound of Maxwell's footsteps could be heard on the floor of the adjoining corridor.

Keene slipped noiselessly into the library and entered a closet in one corner, from which he cautiously could observe all that transpired.

Mary Randall had already replaced the portfolio, and when Maxwell's sharp knock sounded upon the studio door she ran to a desk at one side of the room and pretended to be searching among the papers by which it was partly covered.

Turning her head merely, she cried firmly:

"Come in!"

Maxwell was more than surprised to receive a response to his knock. He had not expected that it would be answered. He opened the door, however, and on beholding Mary Randall, he immediately concluded her mission to be what Keene had suggested, and that his first apprehension was groundless.

But his florid face, with its swift expression of relief, betrayed him to the watching detective as effectively as if he had given utterance to his secret sentiments.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" Maxwell quickly exclaimed. "When I received a response to my knock, I was in hopes to have found Mr. Wildman here."

Miss Randall immediately arose and faced him. Though still quite pale, she commanded herself admirably, and at once replied:

"Mr. Wildman has not yet returned, sir."

"Indeed!"

"I am very mystified by his absence and begin to feel quite anxious," the girl explained, in a conventional way. "Having a key to his rooms, I have been looking over his papers again, in the hope of discovering something that might explain his unusual absence."

"Can I be of any assistance to you?" asked Maxwell, bowing politely.

"Oh, no, sir. I do not wish to disturb things too much. I presume he will return sooner or later, and that my apprehensions are, as a matter of fact, quite groundless."

"You do not fear that anything serious has befallen him, I hope?"

"No, I do not precisely fear it, sir; yet I feel rather anxious. Mr. Wildman is not often absent for so long a time. Still, he is a man of good habits, and I cannot believe he has made any enemies."

"Assuredly not!" exclaimed Maxwell, with feeling. "What little I have seen of him would certainly indicate the making of friends, rather than enemies. I really hope I may meet him again before leaving Boston."

"Have you business with him, sir?"

"I intended to have had," was the grave reply. "I have thought some of giving him an order for a painting. Perhaps I shall find him here by the first of the week."

"I hope so, sir. Indeed," added the girl, smilingly faintly; "I really think so."

"And you are quite welcome to the belief," said Maxwell to himself, as he bowed with grave courtesy and made his departure.

Keene waited till the sound of his steps had died away in the corridor; then he quickly emerged from his concealment and peered out through the curtain. Maxwell was crossing the street, and walking moderately in the direction of Copley Square.

"You did well," said Keene approvingly, turning quickly to Miss Randall.

"And that man?"

"Leave the man to me. I must follow him at once."

"You suspect him?"

"Seriously," said Keene hurriedly. "Hereafter you must remain away from these rooms, and do nothing about this affair until you have heard from me."

"I'll not, sir. I'll go at once."

"And if McKenzie should again visit you at the library, say no more to him than you have said this morning. Do you understand?"

"Precisely!" exclaimed Miss Randall, in some excitement.

"That is all, then!" cried Keene. "I will communicate with you as soon as possible."

Having hurriedly issued these instructions, the detective hastened out upon the street and started in pursuit of Maxwell, whom he presently overtook in Copley Square. Five minutes later the Englishman entered the Brunswick Hotel, with Sheridan Keene just behind him.

It immediately became evident that Maxwell was a guest of the house, and that his appointment with Wildman at the Vendome had been a blind, which Keene at once added to his list of suspicious circumstances.

Removing his coat, Maxwell left it in the coatroom, receiving a check for it, and Keene presently did likewise. As he took his check, and the youth in charge of the room turned to hang the coat on the wall, the detective pushed open the door and entered.

"I have a book in one of the pockets, young man," he explained. "I wish to remove it."

"All right, sir," nodded the employee, stepping aside.

Keene felt in the pocket of his own coat, at the same time turning the collar of that which he recognized to be Maxwell's, and glanced at the tailor's trade-mark. He read, in yellow letters on the back: "Bailey & Co., London."

"Another link in the chain," he said to himself, as he turned from the room and entered the large main office.

That Maxwell had not the slightest apprehension that his movements were being observed, was manifest in his actions. With no apparent interest in any of the gentlemen about the office, the Englishman entered the telephone closet a little later, and for five minutes held communication over the wire. When he emerged there was a smile on his face, and he strode straight away through the corridor toward the main stairs.

He had not disappeared before Sheridan Keene slipped into the telephone closet and rang up the central office.

"Hello!" he cried.

"Hello!"

"Have you still got the wire I just had?" he demanded of the girl at the central station.

"No, sir; you rang off." was the reply.

"Never mind, then. Do you recall the number I gave you?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Let me have it, please. It will save my looking it up again. I wish to use it later."

The girl immediately called back a suburban number.

"Thanks," cried Keene dryly, replacing the instrument.

Having noted the number upon paper, he next consulted the hotel register. At the end of five minutes he had established the fact that Mr. Robert McKenzie, of London, England, had been a guest at the Brunswick for precisely fourteen days.

"Now for the telephone exchange!" he said to himself, with an expression of grim satisfaction. "Finally this mystery is beginning to take a definite shape!"

It required a half hour for him to locate the exchange number, and the moment his gaze fell upon the name joined therewith the truth broke upon him like a revelation.

"Doctor Felix Kennedy! The asylum for the insane!" he exclaimed triumphantly, under his breath. "By Jove! there is a more desperate game afoot than I have imagined. This Kennedy does not enjoy the best of reputations, and it is long odds that John Wildman is now within the walls of his asylum."

Taking a chair in the office, Keene devoted a half hour to carefully considering the situation. The evidence thus far secured indicated that the probable outrage had been committed by men actuated by no ordinary incentive, and that they would halt at nothing desperate to prevent the miscarriage of their designs, or to avert their own exposure. Direct action against them might prove futile. Kennedy's institution offered rare opportunities for knavery; and the confinement of a man, or even his murder, might be effected and the truth forever concealed, should circumstances arise to require it.

"It will not do to chance a search warrant. The hazard is too great. Should these parties become alarmed by discovering that they are suspected, they may successfully end the man and get him out of the way, if it has not already been done," Keene shrewdly reasoned.

"There is but one other method," he finally decided, with a glow of grim resolution in his dark eyes. "I must get into that asylum though it takes a leg! And it must be accomplished with delay!"

CHAPTER V.

A HOPELESS CASE.

It was nearly one o'clock of the same day, and Jason Stone's fine restaurant, which occupies a prominent corner in the suburban district less than a mile from Kennedy's asylum, was comfortably filled with its usual midday patrons. Two only of the damask-covered tables were without one or more occupants, and one of these was about midway of the deep, attractively frescoed room.

It was the hour of the day when business was the most brisk, and half a score of colored waiters were hurrying to and fro. The patrons were about equally divided, gentlemen and ladies; and both the restaurant and the square outside presented the usual lively scene of noonday.

Very little attention was at first paid to the man who presently entered and took a seat at a vacant table in the middle of the room. Yet his garments were rather inferior, and he wore a dark flannel shirt with a red tie, in place of the immaculate linen which ordinarily was a part of the dress of Detective Sheridan Keene.

It had required two solid hours and a conference with Chief Inspector Watts before Keene had perfected his arrangements for the hazardous strategy he was about to undertake; and he had arrived in the square outside only five minutes before.

On the opposite side a physician's carriage was standing, with the doctor himself loitering near by, and twenty feet from the restaurant door one of the local policemen had halted on the curbing.

Keene made a round of the square, and to each of these he gave a few hurried words of instruction, which would have suggested to any chance hearer that their meeting had been prearranged, and that there was something in the wind. There was none who observed them, however, and a moment later the detective entered the restaurant.

A few pairs of eyes were turned curiously upon him as he passed down the room, for his own were taking on a strange and utterly abnormal glare.

His manner was composed, however, and not until he had taken his seat at the table, which was one of the most prominent in the room, did he attract unusual attention.

Then he startled all observers by hanging his hat on the silver caster, and a waiter hastened forward, amid the ripple of laughter which followed the extraordinary act, and quickly interfered.

"That's no place for your hat, sir!" he cried, in a sharp undertone. "Here! I'll take it."

"Don't lose it!" protested Keene, with a quick upward glance. "It's the only one I have."

"I'll not lose it, sir. What's the matter with you? Are you drunk?"

"No; I wish I was," retorted Keene, with a cheerful laugh. "Do I look it?"

"You look all right, sir."

"Oh, I am all right enough," cried the detective, adroitly slipping a bank note into the waiter's ready hand. "I am hungry instead of drunk. Here, where is your program?"

"Bill of fare, sir!"

"Same thing! Bring a tureen of oxtail, a chicken saute, some French peas, and plenty of mashed potatoes. And, say! bring 'em all at once, for I lose my appetite by waiting."

The tip had won the waiter, and he hastened away to serve the order; but Keene's voice had not been moderated, and his extraordinary remarks had reached the ears of those at the nearer tables. All eyes were now turned toward him, to which he appeared utterly oblivious, and whispered remarks were passed from one to another concerning him.

"He's intoxicated, isn't he?"

"He doesn't look as if he'd been drinking."

"Some eccentric fellow, probably."

"Notice how his eyes glitter."

"I believe the man is crazy," a timid girl supplemented the above by anxiously observing.

"What's he doing now?"

For Keene, apparently without eyes or ears for those observing him, was now arranging the dishes in a way to suit him own fancy, making a long row of salt and pepper shakers, a pickle jar, three cruets from the caster, a glass of ice water, and the sugar bowl and creamer, until the line stretched across the table.

"Here, what are you up to?" remonstrated the waiter, now returning to serve his order.

"Making a telephone circuit," cried Keene, laughing. "I want to call up heaven."

"I'll call up the proprietor if you don't let up," protested the waiter, hurriedly replacing the disturbed articles.

"We can't stand for this, you know," he remonstrated softly, as he arranged on the table the various dishes ordered by the detective. "I do not like to turn you out of here after your generous tip, sir, but d'ye see how everybody's staring at you?"

"I'll not bother them if they don't bother me."

"But you'll have to be quiet, sir. Here's your spoon."

"Bring a dish of pudding and an ice cream. 'Twon't take me long to get outside of what there is here."

The waiter thought of the two dollars in his pocket, and taking a chance that the extraordinary visitor would be diverted by his meal, he hastened away to bring the additional order.

The minute his back was turned, however, Keene went to work again with renewed and ludicrous earnestness, to the intense amusement of all observers.

Within a half minute he had a string of dishes clear across the table, his tureen of oxtail soup in the middle, garnished on either side by a plate of chicken saute and a dish of French peas.

Then, as if imagining this arrangement to be a telephone exchange, such as is used in the central offices, he caught up an empty tumbler and placed it over his ear, while with the other hand he proceeded rapidly to stick salt and pepper shakers and small butter dishes into the food before him.

At the same time he began calling loudly, amid the uproar of laughter from those nearer observers who had caught onto his whim:

"Hello! hello! Give me four-eleven-forty-four Frankfort! Who's this? Yes, he's in—wait a minute, I'll call him. Hello! hello! I want central—yes—waiting! Yes, they're going to call us up from heaven! Hello——"

"Here, here! you'll have to stop this!" cried a second waiter, now rushing up to the table.

"Don't bother me!" exclaimed Keene, thrusting him away. "Don't you see I am busy? Hello! there, central! Give me heaven, if you can get it! I want——"

"I'll call an officer!" cried the waiter, rushing toward the door.

"Hold on, I'll call him for you!" yelled Keene, changing the salt shaker from the mashed potatoes and jabbing it into a dish of squash.

A roar of laughter followed this move, but it was fairly silenced by the repeated cries of the detective himself.

"Hello, central, have you got that number? What's that—busy? Go to blazes! Tell them I can't wait. Ring off that other party and connect me—what? Hello! Central—never mind! Here comes some one who'll do just as well!"

This diversion was a Salvation Army lass, who was venturing to approach him to sell a *War Cry*. When he saw her his face lighted up, and his final calls over the imaginary wire rose above the general uproar in the room.

"Hello! hello! I've got the last edition. Tell them I'll see them later, and—what's that? Ring off? All right!"

With which, and amid an utterly indescribable tumult, he quickly transferred the pepper shaker from the plate of chicken into the tureen of oxtail soup, and, dropping the tumbler to the floor with a crash, he thrust a silver dollar into the hand of the astonished army girl. By this time the proprietor of the restaurant, as well as half of the men in the room, were gathered excitedly about the table; and the waiter now was returning with a policeman, the same to whom Keene had spoken outside.

"Hello!" cried the detective, starting up; "here comes the devil in uniform! I told you I'd call him up. What——"

"What's the matter with you, my man?" sternly interrupted the officer, forcing his way through the crowd and seizing Keene by the collar.

The detective burst out laughing, a laugh that rose with wild and unnatural shrillness over all other sounds.

"There's nothing the matter with me!" he cried, with a vacant glare in his dilated eyes. "The trouble's all with you. Why do you collar me when——"

"You come along with me!"

"The man is crazy," interrupted an observer. "Handle him more gently."

"Send for a doctor!" cried another.

"Here's Doctor Cabot!" now exclaimed a third. "Make way and let him pass."

In the face of advice and protests, however, Keene was quickly hustled out upon the sidewalk, where, to blind the crowd which followed, the physician hurriedly examined and questioned him, and speedily declared him to be affected with all the symptoms of insanity.

"The station is not a proper place for him," he peremptorily added to the officer, who still held Keene in charge. "Take him up to the asylum for the present, at least. Call a carriage. I'll go with you, officer. This man is not safe to be at large."

And within another five minutes Detective Keene had been unceremoniously thrust into a carriage, and with the officer and physician on the opposite seat, was being rapidly driven in the direction of Doctor Felix Kennedy's grim institution a mile away.

It was nearly two o'clock when they arrived in the porte-cochère at the main entrance. From his office window Doctor Kennedy had seen the carriage approaching and had recognized the driver. It was nothing unusual for the local physician to bring a patient who had suddenly become violently insane upon the street, or in the station house, and the medical opinion of Doctor Cabot in such cases was all sufficient to Doctor Kennedy.

For the latter was always ready to receive a new patient. It meant money in his pocket and that was by far his chief consideration. He met the carriage at the door with an expression of grave solicitude on his crafty face, and Sheridan Keene, with hair disheveled and garments disordered, and with an utterly abnormal countenance, was removed from the hack and into the asylum reception room.

Doctor Kennedy made only a brief examination of the detective, who ignored his command to be seated, and fell instantly to pacing the floor.

"He was badly taken in Stone's restaurant, and I ordered him brought here," Doctor Cabot explained. "I've questioned him, and made a partial examination. He is evidently affected with religious mania."

"Do you know the man?"

"He says his name is John Moran, and that he lives at the West End. Perhaps we can find something in his pockets by which he may be positively identified."

Doctor Kennedy touched a button on the wall, and the summons almost instantly brought a powerful, dark-visaged fellow into the room, who evidently was one of the asylum attendants.

"Toby," said Doctor Kennedy shortly, "search this man."

Both physicians stood indifferently near by during the operation, while Sheridan Keene maintained, with consummate tact, the delicate and difficult part he was playing. All of his belongings were removed from his pockets, and he had included among them a letter containing the address of one Martha Moran, and which apparently was a letter from his sister.

"I'll communicate with her and explain the circumstances," said Doctor Cabot. "The man had better remain here until we hear from her, and learn more about him."

"By all means," assented Doctor Kennedy, with an eye to his fees. "He certainly has a bad look."

"I'll advise you by telephone as soon as I have heard."

"Very well, doctor," bowed Kennedy, as the local physician withdrew. "Give the man a room in ward A, Toby, in the south wing."

"That wing is full, sir," growled the attendant bluntly. "There's no room vacant except in the north wing, on the fourth floor, sir, above——"

"Silence!" cried Doctor Kennedy, with a sudden commanding ferocity, which startled even Sheridan Keene, and instantly aroused his suspicions.

But the dark face of Toby evinced no surprise, and he appeared utterly indifferent to Kennedy's abrupt display of violence.

"Use your tongue more discreetly," the latter sternly added, with an ugly fire in his frowning eyes. "Put the man in the ward you mentioned, then, and see that he is watched. One moment!"

"Well?"

"Until his identity and condition are more definitely known, give him your personal attention. Do you understand?"

Toby merely nodded and smiled significantly.

Then taking Keene roughly by the shoulder, he led him away.

TO BE CONTINUED.

ROMANCES OF BEACONS.

The origin of the lighthouse is lost in the darkness of ancient antiquity. There are records of its existence before the birth of Christ, as witness the "Pharos" at Alexandria, built 280 B. C. Probably it first came into use when voyages began to extend beyond the hour of sunset, and maybe the earlier beacons took the form of fires kindled on the shore to guide fishermen to the customary landing places.

The romance of lighthouse construction undoubtedly centers around the Eddystone. As long ago as 1696 Winstanley commenced building. Two years later the weak beams of light from the tallow candles first pierced the darkness. The engineer had an unshakable belief in his tower and often expressed a wish to be in it during a severe gale.

This chance came on November 26, 1705, when, a storm appearing imminent, he set out from Plymouth. The hurricane was one of the most terrible recorded in history, and among other damage it swept away every vestige of the lighthouse, those in it, of course, being lost. Within three years another was built, known as Rudyerd's, and like Winstanley's, of wood.

The obvious occurred after an existence of forty-seven years, it being utterly destroyed by conflagration. The next—Smeaton's—was of stone, and lasted until 1881, a period of 120 years, when it was found that it was being undermined, and a new structure, the present and fourth, was erected on the adjacent rock. Smeaton's tower was rebuilt on Plymouth Hoe, where can be seen the original candle chandelier and the gongs operated by clockwork to keep awake the drowsy keepers, so that they should snuff the candles at the proper intervals.

In medieval times the usual illuminant was a coal or wood fire in an open grate, which gave forth a fairly good light on a breezy night. For beacons on rocks at sea candles were used. In 1729 oil was first employed, and in 1790 the Argand circular wick lamp with silvered reflections was introduced. Gas was first experimented with in 1817, and in 1853 the South Foreland was lit by electric light.

WHY WE HAVE TWO EYES.

The advantage of two eyes consist in the fact that we look at objects from a slightly different point of view with each. It is thus that we obtain our ideas of perspective and solidity. For instance, we see both sides of a flat object held edgeways to us, if we keep both eyes open, but we only see one side if we shut one eye. Spectroscopic pictures are formed on this principle by the joining of two photographs of the same object taken from slightly different positions. This gives the appearance of solidity to the flat picture when looked at through the lenses.

HOW ANIMALS ARE STUFFED.

Lions, tigers, and similar large animals are often mounted from the "flat"; in other words, the practical taxidermist imitates the natural appearance of the animal with only his skin to work upon.

There is no skeleton—the skin having been probably sent home from abroad—and the operator is required to construct a lion or tiger with only the skin of the original remaining. To accomplish this difficult task, the skin is placed on the floor, and a tracing made on paper of the necessary proportions of the "body board."

On this body board are fastened a strong rod for the neck and a similar one for the tail. The ribs are imitated in wood, and laths tacked on to make the framework capable of being filled out to the necessary shape. The laths are afterward covered with straw or plaster, and clay is finally added. The legs are modeled with the assistance of plaster, tow, and clay, the tail properly arranged, the skull, or, in its absence, the plaster head, placed in position, and the skin neatly fastened over all.

SIZE OF BRAIN AND EYE.

Among human beings there is probably little difference in the sizes of the brains of the small-eyed ones than those with large eyes. Of course, not many if any experiments along this line have been made, but it is claimed that men of unusual genius generally have striking eyes of more than average size. There are, of course, always exceptions.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

United States Army Men to See French Guns.

Captain Augustine McIntyre and Captain William S. McNair, of the field artillery corps, who have been granted permission to witness the target practice of the French artillery, will be the first foreign officers ever allowed such a privilege by France. They will come to Washington for instructions from Major General Wood, chief of staff of the army, and then depart for Europe.

The French government also has advised the state department that an additional officer will be allowed to attend the Saumur mounted service school and another officer the school of intendance.

Lieutenant Hayden W. Wagner, of the cavalry, will be relieved from the Germany cavalry school in August. No officer will be detailed to succeed him there, but an effort will be made to secure permission for several American officers to serve with German regiments.

Captures a Sea Prize in Hand-painted Crab.

That there are stranger fish in the sea than ever have been caught is a proverb that will have to move along to keep up with a creature taken out of Jamaica Bay, L. I., by John Leahy.

Leahy has the reputation of being one of the best amateur clam diggers that ever plied his trade along Rockaway Beach, but he added to his reputation when he caught the largest horseshoe crab the oldest inhabitant of the beach has ever seen.

The crab was more than a foot wide across the narrowest part of its back, and fully eighteen inches long, not counting its tail. It was not only larger than any other ever taken at this point, but in other ways it is said to be the most marvelous, for on the back of its shell it had a man's face, done in water colors. The face had been painted by an artist of no mean ability, and it depicted a man who had looked long upon the cup that cheers. The eyes were half closed and the nose was very red.

Picture Blown Forty Miles.

During the recent tornado in Tennessee which did such devastation in Murfreesboro and the county, the Rowland family, near Eagleville, consisting of husband, wife, and two children, were killed, and only a young daughter escaped with her life, but she, too, was badly crippled.

The home was totally demolished, and the greater part of the material blown away.

A few days ago a group photograph of the family was found near Lebanon, where it was evidently carried by the fierce winds. The photograph was found at least forty miles from the site of the Rowland home. The relic was given to the little daughter, the only survivor of the family. It was in fairly good condition and the respective members of the family are easily identified.

Find the Rouge Pots of Egypt.

The "tear bottles" which women of the Orient carried centuries ago reveal the hypocrisy of the women. Several of these bottles are included in a collection of glassware which has been bought for $13,000 for the University of Pennsylvania museum. In ancient prints and histories the women of fashion of 1000 B. C. are represented as carrying the "tear bottles" in which to give vent to their grief on public occasion. It now develops that when the woman raised one of the bottles to her eyes she was just dabbing powder over a red spot on her cheek.

Examination of the "tear bottles" in the museum collection disclosed traces of rouge, powder, paint, and cold cream still sticking to the bottom of the glass. In the collection are many cream pots and oil jars for the toilet table wrought in wonderful designs and colors, which have become more beautiful after lying for many centuries in tombs of Egyptian cities where they were found.

United States Fleet Will Cross Atlantic in November.

It was announced by Secretary of the Navy Daniels recently that the Mediterranean voyage of the Atlantic fleet first scheduled for December will be started in November. It is believed, in view of the apparent private settlement of the case with Japan, that the Japanese ambassador will not ask any questions about this proposed earlier movement of the fleet.

Breaks Arm in Vain Effort to Save Baby.

Three-year-old Catherine Brucker, of New York, sliding down the bannisters outside her home on the fifth floor fell to the ground floor. Josephine Sheehan, 16, passing through the hall, saw the child falling and tried to catch the little one.

The weight of the falling child broke her left arm and nearly carried her over the railing. Little Catherine was taken to the hospital, where she died two hours later. Josephine's broken arm was set by the family physician.

Aviator and Plane Fall in Lake Erie.

While making a flight from the East Ninth Street, Cleveland, pier over the lake to Euclid Beach, a distance of about six miles, in his hydroaëroplane recently, Aviator Weldon B. Cooke was thrown into the water several hundred feet offshore when his plane fell as he was making a turn. Cooke's machine sank, but motor boats were near by and the man was rescued. Life-savers towed the plane to shore.

Rich to Pay the War Tax in Italy.

"If it becomes necessary, an appeal will be made to the country in the interest of national defense. It is the firm intention of the government to demand nothing from the lower classes, but to levy the new taxes on the sole basis of real wealth."

This was the declaration which the prime minister, Signor Giolitti, made in the Italian Chamber of Deputies during a debate on the new army bill. There is no country in Europe where the poor are so burdened by taxation in comparison with the rich. Every year $30,000,000 is extracted from the pockets of the masses by a tax on bread alone.

As for the fresh military expenditure, it is rendered imperative by the war in Libya and the need for further measures securing Italy from foreign attack. Recruiting

regulations are to be so modified as to enforce a two years' service system by abolishing the one-year volunteer principle, by reducing the minimum stature, and by abolishing the practice of exemption from conscription for a monetary consideration. It is also proposed to abolish the exemption for only sons. According to a roseate forecast of the government, this measure will have the effect of bringing 40,000 extra men under arms annually at an extra cost of not more than a quarter of a million.

Recovered Gems from Lake.

When W. K. Mower, of Atlanta, Ga., was canoeing at East Lake, Wisconsin, recently, he casually wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and scattered $7,000 worth of diamonds and other precious jewels into the water, which was muddy and twenty feet deep. He had wrapped them in his pocket handkerchief to keep safe for a couple of women friends who were in bathing, and had forgotten all about it.

Mower yelled for help. Several canoes sped to his assistance, and he explained the situation. Eugene Kelly and three or four of the most expert divers among the club athletes immediately got a heavy rowboat and went out to the spot. They fortunately found the bottom of the lake solid at that point. After diving for an hour or more they managed to rescue nearly all of the jewels.

A big diamond horseshoe and two diamond sunbursts were among the things recovered. Several diamond rings were fastened together with a piece of string, and these also were found.

Has Driven Uncle Sam's Mules Fifty-one Years.

With the Fifth Brigade, now encamped at Fort Crockett, Texas, is an old man—a quaint German man—who is 70 years of age. Of this threescore years and ten he has placed fifty-one years in the service of the United States army, driving teams of mules. From 1862 to 1913 is no short time for a man to be laboring at one thing, yet that is what August Blume, assistant wagon master of the Seventh Infantry, has been doing practically all his life. He is one of the few men in the army to-day who served in some capacity in the service during the Civil War.

During the fifty-one years in which he has been in the employ of Uncle Sam he has seen some bad times. Gus, for that is what he is known by in the corral camp at Fort Crockett, came to this country from Germany, where he was born in 1843, a few years prior to the Civil War. In 1862, obeying the call from the government for men in all ranks of the line, he joined the army as a teamster. Since that day—June 15, 1862—he has been continuously in the service of the United States government. He has been placed in dangerous positions in two wars, not considering the numerous Indian skirmishes and battles in which he played an important part.

Blume intends to get a leave from the camp at Fort Crockett and rest for a full day. He intends to spend a greater portion of the day in the downtown section of Galveston viewing the places of interest that he has not had an opportunity of seeing since his arrival in the city.

"I joined the United States army when I was 19 years of age," said Blume. "The Civil War was being waged at the time, and was fairly under way when I drove my first team, pulling a wagon loaded with supplies and ammunition for the Union army. I saw some mean and cruel battles in that war. I remember some of them quite well to this day, although that was fifty-one years ago. I can see pictures of some very stirring scenes on the battlefield, some of them very unpleasant to remember.

"I went through the Spanish-American War. I was with General William R. Shafter when his command was ordered to Cuba at the outbreak of the war. I went through that war without getting hurt in the least. I was at the time with the Fifth Army Corps, commanded by General Shafter.

"I have driven wagons at the time of some of the most horrible Indian massacres ever recorded in history. Practically every post in the United States has been visited by me at some time or another."

Although Blume is 70 years of age, he does not appear to be over 50. He has a family at Fort Leavenworth, where the Seventh, to which he is now assigned for duty, is making its headquarters. He has three daughters and three sons. All his daughters are married and are living near his home, two of them having married ex-soldiers. The three boys have followed railroading, and are now in the central portion of the United States on one of the largest railroads.

Hen Bitten by a Mad Dog Develops Rabies.

A hen with the rabies is the strange sight on the farm of Wesley Donoho, near Georgetown, Del., and one that is almost unbelievable unless actually seen. Hundreds of Georgetown people have seen the hen, and Donoho is carefully keeping it penned up.

Rabies among hens had never been heard of before around Georgetown. A few weeks ago a mad dog got into the poultry yard of Donoho and bit the now afflicted hen. A few days ago the hen began running and pecking at the other chickens. It went into strange fits, falling on its back and sometimes lying like dead, only to have another paroxysm again in a short time.

Record for Laziness.

The laziest man is reported in Arkansas, where he conducts a shoe store in a little town. A woman entered his shop one day recently and said she wanted to buy a pair of shoes. The lazy man, who was sitting on a box at one end of his establishment, looked at her, yawned wearily, and then said: "I can't wait on you to-day. Come in some time when I'm standin' up."

Victims of Camorra Sold to College.

The Italian police have just solved two mysterious Camorra murders which took place six years ago. At that time a wealthy old man named Renzullo and his nephew disappeared in the most mysterious manner. The police started an investigation, but eventually abandoned their search.

The police got a new clew recently, and this led to the discovery that Renzullo and his relative had been enticed to a house and murdered. Their bodies were not hidden, but were sent to the anatomical laboratory of a university, where they were dissected. In this way all trace of the murders was destroyed.

French Like United States Tobacco.

The taste of French smokers for tobacco grown in the United States has increased remarkably during the past twelve months. Seven times as much tobacco entered France from the United States in January and February,

1913, as was brought in during the corresponding months of the previous year. The importations of January and February, 1913, amounted to $800,000 in value. French buyers of tobacco are now kept in America the whole year round.

Last year the French government received a net revenue of more than $105,000,000 from the monopoly it exercises over the sale of tobacco in the republic.

Town Must Bathe Once Every Week.

Canton, Ohio, folks must bathe at least once a week, and "all over," at that. The board of health has said so.

In order that none can misunderstand, the board has arranged to post in every home where soap and water are believed to be at a premium a set of rules printed in five languages and specifying $25 and costs as punishment of any one who neglects the weekly clean-up.

Health Officer D. Hinden says he put the words "all over" in the rules because many would wash their faces and, relying on a technicality, call it a bath.

New Mikado Fond of Camera.

The late Emperor Mutsuhito, of Japan, who reigned during the "Era of Enlightenment," was averse to photography and electricity. He never sat for his portrait, and he never allowed an electric light to be installed in the residential part of the palace, which was lighted with candles and oil lamps.

His successor to the throne, Yoshihito, has changed all this. The new emperor shows no disinclination toward either photography or electricity. He has sat time after time for his photograph. In fact, he is an amateur photographer himself. He has a number of cameras, and is fond of "snapping" his children in the royal garden. As to electricity, he has ordered the candles and oil lamps in the Chiyoda Palace, in Tokio, to be replaced by modern electric lights, the installation of which has just been completed.

In many other ways the new emperor shows modern tendencies. He was formerly an ardent bicyclist, but since taking on the dignity of monarch he has abandoned the bicycle in favor of high-power automobiles. He is a crack billiard player, and has had two beautiful billiard rooms installed in the palace, one with American and the other with English tables. Here, after dinner, he challenges his court chamberlains to a friendly game, and usually wins—quite on his own merits.

The emperor and empress, who have been living in the Aoyama Palace, will soon occupy the Chiyoda Palace as their main and permanent residence.

Growing Flowers Tie Up Railroad.

Luther Burbank, California wizard, has been outdone on the Romney, W. Va., branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Recently several broken floor boards in a car loaded with morning glory, nasturtium, and sweet-pea seeds allowed the seed to scatter along the railroad tracks and right of way for twenty-eight miles.

Heavy rain and the sun brought up the flowers in such profusion that the tracks are covered to a depth of three feet with vines running in a riot of color.

Bridges have been transformed into floral bowers, and the small train on the branch no longer can make her schedule. On the heavy grade at Springfield entangling vines caused the train to stall, and the passengers, baggage, and seventy-one packages of whisky had to be unloaded to relieve the train of weight before it could proceed.

When Engineer G. W. Light took his train out nasturtiums bloomed all over the tender, putting out the fire.

Night and day shifts of trackmen have been fighting the flowers from Green Springs to Romney.

The Green Spring station is buried under flowers, and the roundhouse at Romney is covered. Nasturtiums and morning glories are sprouting in engine tenders, and the running boards have been transformed into flower boxes, with the vines threatening to choke the boiler laggings. The road and rolling stock is overwhelmed with flowers.

Survivor of First Navy for New York Centennial.

Memories of the good old days of a century ago, when the American flag ruled the seas, have been revived by the announcement that the famous old frigate *Constellation*, sister ship of the *Constitution* ("Old Ironsides"), is to be taken from Newport to the New York Navy Yard, there to undergo repairs in order that she may play a part in the centennial celebration to be held in New York a year hence.

Less famed than her sister ship, the *Constellation* played fully as important a part in those sea battles prior to the War of 1812, which caused the Stars and Stripes to be feared and respected whenever it appeared above the horizon.

By force of circumstances, the *Constellation* did not engage in any real battle during the second conflict with England, having the misfortune to be tied up inside Hampton Roads by the strong British blockade.

The *Constellation* was one of the ships authorized by an act of Congress in 1794, when the Algerian pirates were making depredations on American commerce. She was launched September 7, 1795.

Her first fight, on February 9, 1799, was a victory, the French frigate *Insurgente* being taken off the island of Nevis. One of the Americans in that battle was Commodore David Porter, then a midshipman, and to him fell the proud honor of going aboard the *Insurgente* as a leader of the prize crew. Almost a year to a day later another French frigate, the *Vengeance*, although equipped with more guns and with a larger crew, also fell before the *Constellation*.

During the war with the Barbary state in the following years, she played a prominent part in the blockade of the ports on the African coast. When the war of 1812 broke out, the *Constellation* was at Washington. After receiving repairs, she sailed down to Hampton Roads, but a strong British blockade prevented her from going out to sea. This blockade continued throughout the war. During the years that followed the war she made many cruises to the Mediterranean and the south Atlantic. Her experiences just before the Civil War were mostly with African slavers and pirate ships.

When the Rebellion broke out the *Constellation* proceeded to the Portsmouth Navy Yard. In 1862 she was sent to the Mediterranean in pursuit of the Confederate ship *Sumter*, but during the two years that followed the two vessels never came in sight of each other. In 1864 the *Constellation* was made one of Farragut's West Gulf squadron.

Soon afterward she was sent North, and from 1865 to 1867 she was receiving ship at Norfolk, then until 1870 she was receiving ship at Philadelphia; in 1871 she was

practice and gunnery ship at Washington, and was then sent to the naval academy at Annapolis, where she was used as a practice ship until 1888. She has been at Newport since 1894.

Outspoken Intelligence.

A letter addressed "To my dear God in heaven," written in a child's handwriting, was recently posted in a Russian townlet. As the address was written in German, the Russian post authorities forwarded it to the German frontier post office at Tilsit. The postmaster of the latter place returned it to its place of origin, with the following superscription: "To be returned. The addressee is in heaven, with which Germany has no communication."

Million Dollars Left Man Who Lent $700 to Farmer Lad.

Doctor E. S. Higley, of Wellston, Ohio, has been repaid $1,000,000 for the loan in the early '80s of $700 to Charles Froelich, a struggling farmer lad, to complete his education as a mining engineer. Soon after Froelich went to Australia, and was not heard from for several years.

Eight years ago Froelich, grown beyond the physician's recognition, walked into Doctor Higley's office and paid the $700, with compound interest. He had been successful in Australia and South Africa, and was wealthy.

After a few weeks Froelich returned to Australia. Nothing was heard from him until a few days ago, when a lawyer arrived from Melbourne, Australia, and notified Doctor Higley that Froelich had died without relatives, and had left his entire estate, valued at $1,000,0000, to his benefactor. Doctor Higley is 70 years old.

Walks Fifty Miles to See Child Graduate.

Elzy Lay, reformed bandit and bank robber, who thirty years ago was known and feared as one of the most desperate criminals of the West, walked all the way from his mountain home, near Baggs, Wyo., to Vernal, Utah, a distance of more than fifty miles, to witness the graduation of his daughter at the Wilcox School, near Vernal.

Lay attended the commencement exercises, watched his daughter receive her diploma, and then warmly embraced the girl, from whom he had been separated sixteen years.

Ten years ago Lay reformed. He is now the owner of a cattle ranch.

Wonders of the "Imperator."

Among the wonders of the new steamship *Imperator*, the largest liner afloat, are:

A flower garden, with a large mint bed.
A candy and toy store for children.
A notion store.
A running track.
An elaborate Roman bath, two stories high, 65x41 feet, made of bronze and marble.
A swimming tank 31x21 feet, with a maximum depth of 9 feet.
Turkish, Russian, and mineral baths, 220 in number.
A photographic dark room.
The largest floating ballroom in the world—100x60x18 feet.
A rudder that weighs 90 tons.
A winter garden, filled with rich, tropical vegetation.
A Ritz-Carlton restaurant, with a veranda café.
A roof garden.
A gymnasium with electrically driven Zander apparatus.
A millionaire's apartment, the size of a 12-room New York flat. It has a private garden and deck, and would perhaps bring $30,000 a year on Manhattan.
A public stenographer.
A florist.
Six barbers.
A manicurist.
A gardener.
A tailor.
A printing department, with three printers.
A hospital, with five physicians.
A cabinetmaker.
Four elevators, running through five decks.
The *Imperator* is nearly one-fifth of a mile long.
She can carry 6,000 persons.
She has five captains.
She carries eighty-three lifeboats.
Her wireless is powerful enough to reach land when she is in mid-ocean.
She has eight kitchens.
Two chefs and 116 assistant chefs.

For a seven-day voyage the following quantities of food are carried:

48,500 pounds of fresh meats.
48,000 eggs.
121,000 pounds of potatoes.
27,500 pounds of fresh vegetables.
10,500 pounds of fowl and game.
9,000 pounds of fish and shellfish.
12,500 quarts of milk and cream.
400 pounds of tea.
500 pounds of chocolate and cocoa.
7,000 pounds of coffee.

Edgar Willett Would Shorten Baseball Games.

Edgar Willett, Detroit's clever pitcher, has advanced another idea as to a method of shortening baseball games.

Edgar caught the idea while watching Sam Crawford amble around the bases recently after smashing the ball into the bleachers for a home run.

"Why not permit Crawford to run to first and then return to the bench, instead of consuming a minute or so walking about the sacks?" says Edgar.

"There are, we'll say, fifty home runs hit in the American League each season. That means an hour wasted. Every one knows the hit is a home run when it drops into the bleachers or goes over the fence, so what's the use of wasting time and effort?"

Boy Trisects Angle.

Philadelphia harbors a mathematical prodigy, and perhaps a second Sidis, of Harvard, if his demonstration of the trisection of an angle, a problem which has puzzled all the ages, meets with the approval of several mathematical authorities, including the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University. The solution was submitted by Sydney H. Gross, a student at the Central High School.

Young Gross startled the faculty of Central High School the other day by telling one of his teachers that he had discovered a method of trisecting an angle. A model of the experiment has been forwarded to several mathematicians of national repute.

Professor M. J. Bobb, president of the Philadelphia Section of the Middle States and Maryland Mathematical Association, was so impressed with the solution presented by

the boy that he exhibited the experiment to his classes in mathematics at the University of Pennsylvania.

A thorough search through mathematical literature has failed to reveal a solution similar to that presented by the youth.

One Thousand Buried by Pastor.

If all persons who have been buried by the Reverend Frederick Mueller, of Benona, Mich., came back to life they could populate a city. For Mr. Mueller began his ministerial work fifty years ago.

He is pastor of the Benona German Lutheran Church, and his parishioners tendered him an anniversary jubilee on the day he left a half century of continuous work behind him. In connection with the jubilee they presented him with a purse of gold.

Mr. Mueller has performed 803 marriages. He has buried more than 1,000 persons. He has confirmed 6,742, christened 2,740, has delivered 10,000 sermons, and probably 100,000 prayers.

Mr. Mueller and his wife have brought twelve children up to manhood and womanhood. One daughter is the wife of the Reverend I. D. Ehman, Conklin, Mich. Three sons are ministers, one in Port Huron, one in Knoxville, Tenn., and a third in Brazil, South America. The others are successful in various other lines of human endeavor.

Helen Gould Thanks Soldiers.

Mrs. Helen Gould Shepard has written a letter of thanks to the 23,500 enlisted men of the United States army who recently presented to her a gold and silver vase costing $2,350, to which the soldiers contributed 10 cents each.

"I am delighted with the inscription," said Mrs. Shepard, in her letter, "but more than all do I prize the friendly thought that I know so well accompanied your splendid memorial. For several years—since the Spanish War—you men of the army have made me realize and value your friendship."

This Girl Graduate Can Throw.

With an audience of over 1,000, including priests and sisters, as well as parents of the graduates, Elsa Mathilda Umla, of Brooklyn, a member of the graduating class of St. Joseph Seminary, a select school at Hartford, Conn., threw a league baseball over the school building of four stories with all the ease and abandon of a big leaguer. The ball landed on the other side of the school, after having shot into the air a distance of 150 feet.

The girl is not the kind of robust and masculine type that one might associate with such a feat. Slight of build, she is, however, exceedingly supple, aud has always practiced throwing boy-fashion rather than girl-fashion.

No, she is not a suffragette, and you had better not suggest that she take to hurling bricks in behalf of the militants.

Prince Does Twenty-mile March.

"Cadet Edward," as the Prince of Wales is enrolled and known in the officers' training corps, marched twenty miles recently, carrying a rifle, knapsack, and water bottle. The thermometer was 80 degrees in the shade, but he finished in good condition.

The prince slept in a barn with his fellow cadets. He turned out at 5 o'clock in the morning and washed at the village pump. It was already hot when the march started, and soon after the sun was broiling. At ten miles some of the cadets gave up, and were put in ambulances. Most of them, however, including the prince, went through the twenty miles, notwithstanding the choking dust, the heat, and the weight of their equipment.

During the last five miles, when all were getting fagged out, somebody suggested the prince fall out. He replied with a determined "No." The march was finished at midday. The prince then slept for two hours, after which he swam across a pond.

Cures Arterial Diseases.

A remarkable confirmation of the value of "dursonvalization," or the treatment of certain diseases by the high-frequency current, was recently given before the Paris Academy of Medicine by Professor Letulle, director of the Boucicault Hospital.

Professor Letulle was charged by the Academy to investigate thoroughly and report on the communication of Doctor Moutier, who for years had made a special study of the electrical treatment of arteries affected by too much or too little elasticity. The result is, says Professor Letulle, that he has definitely succeeded in curing diseased arteries and restoring a normal circulation to the affected parts.

Advancing from this point, Doctor Moutier proceeded to supply "dursonvalization" to several apparently widely different diseases, all of which, however, were due to a radial hypotension. He found that treatment of a multitude of heart troubles and affections of the liver, kidneys, varicose veins, and diseases of women revealed remarkable results when dealt with in this way.

"Even neurasthenia and tuberculosis," said Professor Letulle, "have been greatly benefited by Doctor Moutier with this treatment. Having made it my business to follow for several years Doctor Moutiers' researches at the Boucicault Hospital, and having checked all the results, I feel it my duty to render public homage to him. All the facts reported by him to the Academy are correct, and all the conclusions which follow from them are justified."

The Academy unanimously passed a vote of thanks to Doctor Moutier for his communications as being of most important value to medical science.

No Cooler for Deputies Now.

A historic apartment in the Chamber of Deputies, Paris, has just been abolished—namely, the so-called "little room," in which formerly a politician who was too excited or insulting was locked up to cool off.

The room contained only a bed and a water jug, and the deputy could be imprisoned for a maximum of three days. It has not been used for many years, the reason generally given that parliamentary bad language and excitement had become so general that it is the politicians who keep cool who are the exception nowadays.

In case of possible emergencies, however, boisterous deputies can be conducted to the office of the medical service, which is regarded by the amused public even more suitable, since, although it lacks a bed, it is fitted with an admirable shower bath.

Aid for Land Cultivators.

Special consideration for farmers who actually cultivate land on government reclamation projects, as against speculators, was announced as an interior department policy re-

cently by Secretary Lane. In line with this, the secretary ordered a temporary reduction to one-third of the amount due from present settlers on final building charge installments, provided no payment shall be less than 50 cents an acre. The unpaid balance will be added to the last installments for water-right applications.

This action was taken in recognition of the difficulties many settlers on irrigated lands have had in meeting their obligations to the government.

No person will receive the concession who has not paid all the amounts due for operation and maintenance on December 1 next, and who has cultivated less than one-half of the irrigable area of his land, or not less than five acres for each full irrigation season since water was first available.

"The man who makes a farm and irrigates it is the man I am interested in primarily, not the land speculator," said the secretary. "On some of our reclamation projects we have been making money for land speculators, rather than homes for farmers. The man who irrigates his land should have the easiest terms from the government, because he is the one who is giving the public the benefit of that land."

Beat Britons at Own Game.

By their daring and their pluck, the Americans won the second and final game of the polo match with England, at Hempstead, L. I., thereby retaining the international trophy for at least another year. The victory is all the greater because polo is a British game. Last year the American players were just as successful. Thirty-five thousand persons saw the men, ponies, and ball rushing up and down the field, and when finally the clanging of gongs announced that the game was over there was a terrific din of cheers, whistles, and automobile "honks" proclaiming another American triumph in an international contest.

Smugglers Use Coffin.

Smugglers of saccharine, on which there is a high import duty in Germany and a higher one still in Austria, are ever inventing new tricks to elude the authorities, of which the public learns only when the customs inspectors hit by accident upon the contraband.

A short time ago the inhabitants of a Bavarian village, on the Swiss frontier, were amazed to see a modest funeral procession, coffin, pallbearers, mourners, and undertaker, all in order, pass through the village with policemen and inspectors acting apparently as honorary escort. A halt was made at the police station, the coffin was opened, and from it was taken about a hundred pounds of saccharine which the smugglers had attempted to introduce in this way.

At one of the railroad stations in Berlin recently one of the roomy furniture vans which, in Europe, are filled with household goods, loaded on a flat car, and shipped to any desired city, was accidentally opened. Railroad employees were surprised to find it loaded with broken furniture of no value. As the car came from Switzerland, the police were called in, and a thorough examination for illegal articles was made, but without effect.

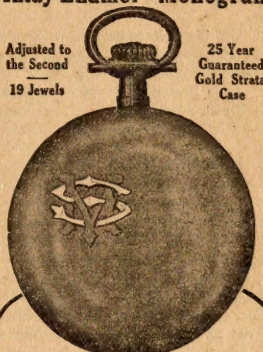
Finally one of the policemen noticed the unusual thickness of the walls of the van. Investigation showed a space two inches wide between the side walls and a commodious secret garret under the roof packed solidly with saccharine. The same van had made the trip between Schaffhausen and Berlin at least once before, according to the railroad record. The van and contents were confiscated, but the consignee disappeared.

Most of the saccharine smuggled into Germany is destined for Austria, the smugglers finding it much easier to hoodwink the Austrian officials with shipments from Germany than elsewhere. Also the Austrian duty is higher.

A classic trick, now exposed and no longer practiced, was to send candles to be blessed to the pilgrimmage monastery, at Einsiedeln, in Switzerland, after which they were exported to Austria. Here they went, not to the pious, but to a refinery, to be melted up and the sachharine in them removed.

Just Out!

"Inlay Enamel" Monograms



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780—Dr. Quartz's Oath.
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796—The Lure of Gold.
797—The Man With a Chest.
798—A Shadowed Life.
799—The Secret Agent.
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801—The Red Button.
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